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ABSTRACT

The 28 essays in this journal issue focus on methodology, interpretation, and classroom application of research in the language arts. Following a preface on the role of research in English instruction, the topics discussed include the following: (1) a research base for a large-scale evaluation of writing; (2) implications of teaching writing as communication; (3) practical applications of language learning theory in the middle school and junior high; (4) a comparison of the direct method and the context method of teaching vocabulary; (5) how research can affect curriculum decisions; (6) the speaking writing relationship; (7) research on gender and writing; (8) sentence combining exercises; (9) a model to overcome writer's block in the composing process; (10) research-based English teacher skills for classroom interaction; (11) a research-based rationale for using drama in the classroom; (12) the divided self in the classics and popular literature as a topic for composition classes; (13) research on revision; (14) hemispheric integration and composition; and (15) audience in composition. (HTH)

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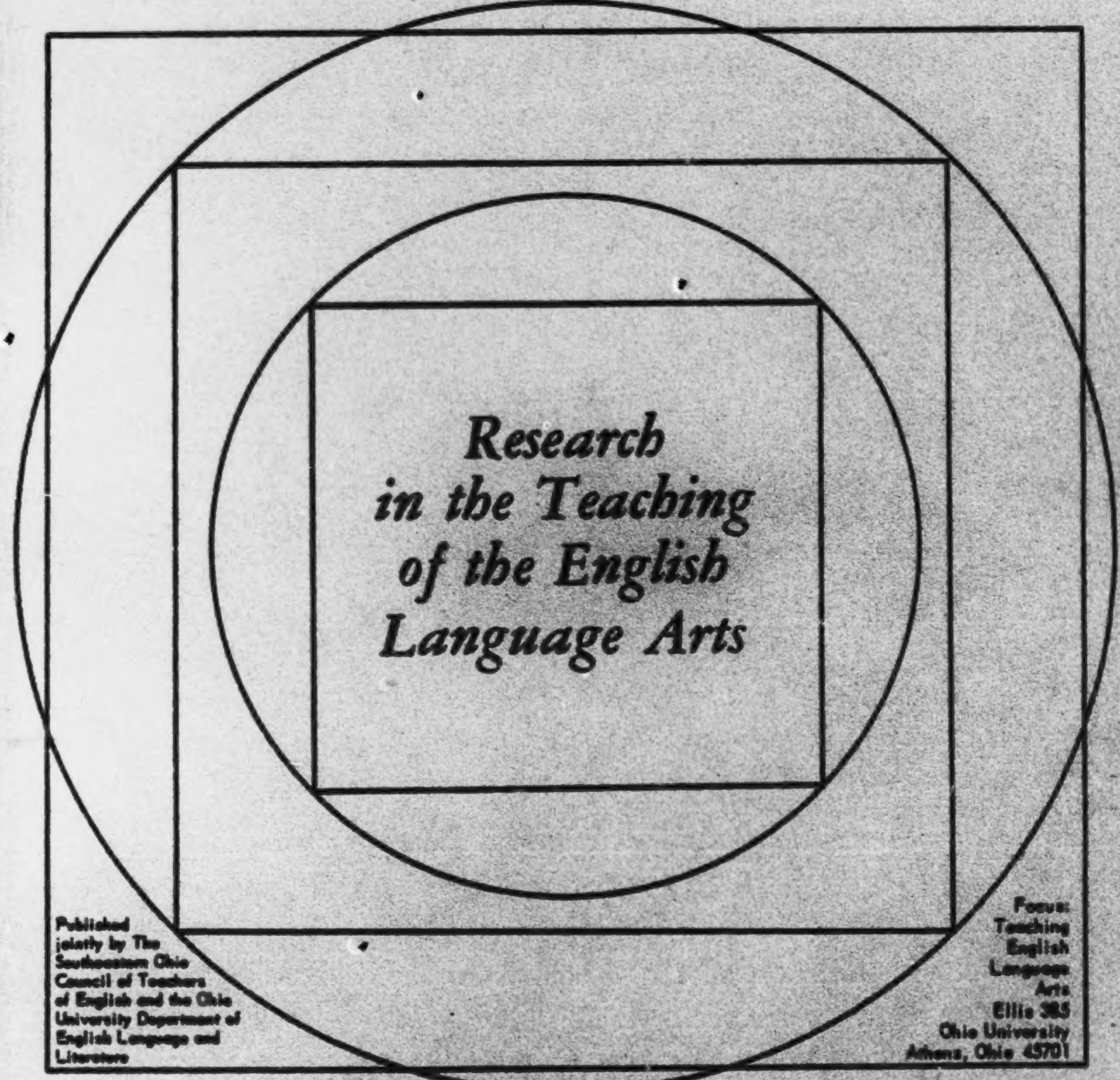

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FOCUS: TEACHING ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

Volume IX Winter 1983 Number 2

RESEARCH IN THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH

Guest Editor: David Bergdahl

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INTRODUCTION

WHY WE NEED RESEARCH: A GUEST-EDITOR'S PREFACE

by
David Bergdahl

This "Research in Teaching the English Language Arts" issue of FOCUS begins with an article by L. Ramon Veal and Sally Hudson which in its first sentence mentions the competency-based education movement and the need to develop performance-based assessments. A chill may well ascend the spines of SOCTE members, reading that sentence, but the reality is that state legislators increasingly clamor for accountability. But, fortunately for teachers of all levels, all we need to do to combat accountability-freaks is to demonstrate that our pedagogical practices are effective. If we, as teachers, agree that we are the professionals who must assess academic performance, then we have the responsibility to use the best available knowledge for curriculum building and testing. This issue contains twenty-seven articles which bring research to bear on the problems teachers face.

Here readers may find reports of individual research in articles by Veal-Hudson, Self, Groff, Godsey-Krabbe, Dragga, Hardman, McCormick-Suppa, Peters, Dunn-Pizzo-Sinatra-Barretto, Kelly, Glassner, Dunn-Cavanaugh-Eberle-Zenhausern--twelve articles in all. Other articles in this issue review significant research: Dragga, Hardman, Price, Peters, Stewig, Hancock. Others interpret research: Rowan, Anderson, Nutter, Cronin, Luce. Pytlik supplies a bibliographical essay; substantial bibliographies follow articles by Anderson, Anderson-Burkett, Dragga, Hardman, Nutter, Skinner, Peters, Lipton-Troen, Stewig, Hancock. Many articles give practical applications for classroom use: see the articles by Rowan, Anderson, Anderson-Burkett, Hardman, Price, Laque, Skinner, McCormick-Suppa, Kelly, Weaver. All are worth reading. Please do!

Ohio University
Athens, Ohio

A RESEARCH BASE FOR A LARGE-SCALE EVALUATION OF WRITING

by
L. Ramon Veal and Sally Hudson

The competency based education movement has led to the specification of performance objectives and the need to develop applied performance assessments. One competency frequently identified for high school graduation by legislatures and boards of education is the "ability to select, organize and compose written material in the context of academic problems, everyday tasks and employment activities" (Georgia State Board of Education Policy 30-700). This ability to write is best tested, according to many professionals, directly through actual writing (NCTE, 1979; ETS, 1978; CEEB, 1979), and at least twenty-three states now rely on writing samples for all or part of their statewide writing assessments (Spandel and Stiggens, 1980). Approximations of this ability can also be tested indirectly with objective tests. These "skills related to writing," like choosing the correctly spelled word from a list, selecting the appropriate punctuation for an unpunctuated sentence, or picking out the best organized paragraph from among several offered, can all be assessed reliably (Spandel and Stiggins, 1980; Godshalk, et al, 1966; Coffman, 1971; Breland and Gaynor, 1979). Determining which approach or what combination of approaches to use is therefore a primary question for large-scale assessments of writing.

The results described here check empirically the potential validity, reliability and costs of several direct and indirect measures of writing. The direct measures include holistic, analytic, primary trait, and mechanics counts scoring of actual writing samples. The indirect measures include the language arts items of the following objective tests: California Achievement Test, Iowa Test of Basic Skills, Tests of Achievement and Proficiency, and Writing Proficiency Test.

Twenty-four high schools in eighteen Georgia school systems participated in this study. As a group, they include almost ten percent of Georgia high schools. They represent a range of geographical areas (north, middle, or south Georgia), achievement levels (based on whether the school had more or less than 60 percent of its students achieving 17 of 20 objectives in the language arts section of the state criterion referenced test), and system sizes (either a one high school system or a system with two or more high schools).

English teachers from these schools served as planning committee members and raters of writing samples. Approximately one hundred tenth grade students from each high school were randomly selected for testing. Each participating school received two tests: one writing sample that could be scored holistically, analytically, or by mechanics counts and either an objective test or a second writing sample to be scored for primary traits. Tests were distributed so that each test would be given in each geographic area, achievement level range, and school size.

FINDINGS (NOTE: Tables mentioned are at the end of article)

Based on the reported experience of the Educational Testing Service (1978) and other agencies such as the Clearinghouse for Applied Performance Testing (1980), holistic ratings were selected as the main or most widely representative score. Initially, inter-rater reliability for the holistic ratings (the ones to be compared with other scoring methods) was therefore an important issue. Table I shows that the range was from .69 to .76, close to similar holistic reliabilities. Three direct measures and four indirect measures were then compared to the holistic scores. Therefore, results are reported from seven different groups, shown in Table 2. Clearly, analytic ratings correspond most closely to holistic ratings (.64), and the scores of the Iowa Test of Basic Skills from the indirect measures come closest (.70) to the holistic ratings.

The .64 correlation between holistic ratings and overall or total analytic ratings cover sub-scores on the analytical scale. As Table 3 indicates, holistic score correlations with analytic sub-scores parallel the overall .64 correlation. They are as follows: content, .62; style, .58; and mechanics,.57. Overall agreement between the two analytic raters is high, .90 as Table 4 indicates. The raters agree only slightly more on the content sub-score (.82) than on style (.76) or mechanics (.80).

Holistic scores and scores for the mechanics count all correlate in a negative direction, as Table 5 notes. That situation results from the fact that holistic ratings assign high scores for the best papers while the mechanics count assigns the highest scores to the papers with the most errors. In this case, significant correlations which appear negative can really reflect common or positive associations. For instance, the low moderate correlations (-.31, -.23, -.30, -.25, -.29) indicate at least a minor association between papers rated holistically and by mechanics counts of punctuation, capitalization, awkward construction, agreement, and word choice. There are no reliability estimates to report.

Though not tabled, the correlation between the two primary trait raters for each paper turned out to be .72, very close to the level of agreement for the holistic ratings, .69 through .76.

Holistic ratings were compared to indirect measures (objective tests) as well as other direct measures. Reliability coefficients for indirect measures (Cronbach Alphas) are listed in Table 6. For total tests, these coefficients seem high enough; but, except for the ITBS, subscores are mixed and only moderate at best.

Many significant correlations emerged from the trial of these four tests, as Table 7 reports. The Iowa Test of Basic Skills showed the strongest correlation with the holistic ratings, .50's and .60's. The lowest correlations came with the California Achievement Test. Second and third place, in terms of correlation, went to the Writing Proficiency Test and the Tests of Achievement and Proficiency, respectively.

Even though the main comparisons were between holistic ratings and seven other measures, several other relationships were checked (see Table 8). Analytic ratings correlated with four other measures as follows: mechanics count,

-.33 (really a positive connection; primary trait, .19 (statistically significant but still low); Iowa Test of Basic Skills, .83 (paralleling the ITBS-holistic relationship but a relatively small N, 29); and Writing Proficiency, .01 (virtually no connection). And, in addition to the -.33 analytic/mechanics count relationship, the mechanics counts further correlated with primary trait scores, -.03 (virtually nothing); ITBS, -.67 (actually a positive association but still a low N); and Writing Proficiency, -.05 (again nothing).

Costs for scoring individual student papers were calculated based on actual expenditures from this project. Scoring costs may differ depending on how raters are paid, e.g. stipends only for non-school days, release days only for substitute pay on school days, or either method in combination with travel expenses. Table 9 details the estimated per student cost for each method of reimbursement and for each scoring measure for writing samples. For each measure, releasing teachers from school allows the least expensive scoring while paying both stipends and travel incurs the greatest expense. Objective tests scored by computer averaged $.53 per student.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In general, the results of this project support the findings of previous researchers (Breland and Gaynor, 1979; Spandel and Stiggins, 1980). Holistic scoring does indeed require less time and money, making it the most economical of the direct measures. Analytic scoring does correlate highly with holistic ratings and does provide more detailed analysis of some holistic ratings. Primary trait and mechanics count scoring, because of lower correlations and higher cost figures, may more appropriately remain the tools of the researcher concerned with more specific contexts and features of writing. Among objective tests used here, the Iowa Test of Basic Skills appears to be most highly correlated to a direct measure of writing. The smaller cost of selecting and using an objective test as an indirect measure of writing may be advantageous if users are primarily interested in testing only mechanical skills related to writing.

If a large scale summative assessment of writing is what is needed, then in light of validity, reliability, and cost considerations, recommendations from this study call for a holistically rated writing sample as a measure of minimum competence because of its face validity, proven reliability (.69 though .76), and economy ($.39 to $1.55 per paper). A backup system whereby certain of the holistically rated papers are also rated analytically to give detailed feedback like that provided in regular English classes is also suggested. Since at least one of the indirect measures, the Iowa Test of Basic Skills, correlated rather highly (.70) with the holistic ratings and since it is similar to analytic ratings with which it correlates .83, a carefully chosen objective measure might substitute for this analytic backup.

The consideration of the user at this point becomes whether the cost or the face validity of a direct assessment of writing is more critical. (See Breland and Gaynor, 1979.) The selection of an appropriate measure will depend on the scope and purposes of the writing assessment as well as the resources available.

A RESEARCH BASE FOR A LARGE-SCALE EVALUATION OF WRITING

Ramon Veal and Sally Hudson
University of Georgia

TABLES

TABLE 1
Inter-rater Reliability for Holistic Ratings by Comparison Group

Correlation Between Holistic Raters	Analytic Group	Mechanics Count Group	Primary Trait Group	TAP Grp	CAT Grp	ITBS Grp.	Writing Profic. Group
A & B	.74	.69	.73	.71	.76	.74	.70
N=	344	352	302	233	257	255	276

All correlations are significant at the .01 level.

TABLE 2
Correlations Betwen Holistic Ratings and Other Measures

Scoring Method	Analytic	Mechanics Count	Primary Trait	TAP	CAT	ITBS	Writ Prof
Holistic	.64	-.25(est)	.19	.42	.40	.70	.57
N=	342	354	302	233	257	255	276

All correlations are significant at the .01 level.

TABLE 3
Correlations of Holistic Ratings and Analytic Sub-score Ratings

	Analytic (N = 344)			
Scoring Method	Content	Style	Mechanics	Total
Holistic (N = 342)	.62	.58	.57	.64
Means	26.00	12.66	25.81	64.33
Range	10-40	5-20	10-40	25-100

All correlations are significant at the .01 level.

TABLE 4
Inter-rater Reliability for Two (A and B) Analytic Ratings

Content	Style	Mechanics	Total
.82	.76	.80	.90

All correlations are significant at the .01 level.

TABLE 5
Correlations Between Holistic Ratings and the Component Scores of the Mechanics Counts

Scoring Method	Spelling	Punctuation	Capitalization	Fragments	Run-ons	Awk. Cons.	Agreements	Word Choice
Holistic (N=352)	-.05	-.31*	-.23*	-.12	-.13	-.30*	-.25*	-.29*
Means (errors per 100 words)	2.4	2.7	.7	.5	.9	.9	.7	1.2

*Significant at the .01 level.

TABLE 6
Reliability Coefficients* for Indirect Measures

Tests &Test Category	Spelling	Capitalizatn.	Punctuation	Usage	Sent. Strc	Paragrph.	Essay	Letter	Total
ITBS	.08	.71	.73	.90	--	.74	--	.88	.89
TAP	.47	.83	.64	.53	.51	-.02	.50	.57	.83
CAT	.53	.31	.59	.31	.47	.45	--	--	.59
WRT PRF	.47	.22	.12	.50	.18	.03	.69	.76	.80

*Cronbach Alphas

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TABLE 7
Correlations Between Holistic Ratings and Objective Test Scores

Tests &Test Categories	Spelling	Capitalztn.	Punctuation	Usage	Sent Strc	Paragrph.	Essay	Letter	Total
Hol. Vs									
ITBS (N=258)	.52	.60	.65	.65	--	.48	--	.54	.70
TAP (N=242)	.29	.23	.36	.42	.16*	.29	.24	.29	.42
CAT (N=270)	-.06*	-.20	.35	.29	.37	-.09*	--	--	.40
WRIT PROF (N=285)	.43	.44	.45	.51	.43	.47	.23	.35	.57

*Not significant at .01 level; all others are.

TABLE 8
Correlations Among the Scoring Methods Checked
Other Than Those Checked Primarily With Holistic Ratings

Scoring Methods	Mechanics Count	Primary Trait	ITBS	Writing Proficiency
Analytic	-.33 (N=308)	.19 (N=109)	.83 (N=29)	.01* (N=285)
Mechanics Count		-.03* (N=109)	-.67 (N=29)	-.05* (N=285)

*Not significant at the .01 level; all others are.

TABLE 9
Scoring Costs Per Student for Each Direct Measure of Writing

	Holistic	Analytic	Primary Trait	Mechanics Counts
Stipends Only	$ .72	$2.37	$1.07	$1.06
Released Days Only	$ .39	$1.29	$ .58	$ .58
Stipends and Travel	$1.55	$5.07	$2.29	$2.27
Released Days and Travel	$1.22	$3.99	$1.80	$1.79

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TEACHING WRITING AS COMMUNICATION:
IMPLICATIONS FOR ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY INSTRUCTION

by
Katherine E. Rowan

We have many ways of looking at writing. We can analyze a writer's style, ideas, organization, development, grammar, spelling, punctuation, and penmanship. Unfortunately--because it is easy to do so--we sometimes evaluate elementary and secondary students' writing according to only the last four of these categories. This tendency can be avoided, though, if we know exactly what sorts of ideas, organization, development, and style we are looking for in a paper.

One way of determining what an elusive category like "ideas" should mean to teachers and students is to think about why people write when they are not in school. People write to persuade others to buy their products; to report laboratory findings or gambling odds; to console a saddened friend; to congratulate others; to complain; to thank; to record; to memorialize. Each of these represents a communicative goal, an intention we accomplish through speech or writing. By focusing our writing instruction on the intentions or goals of writers, we can pull ourselves away from grading punctuation for punctuation's sake or beautiful ideas for beauty's sake and instead grade both ideas and punctuation and all other aspects of writing for the sake of effective communicative purpose--be that informing, persuading, or entertaining.

Sometimes teachers find it hard to teach writing as communication. At a recent Purdue University Rhetoric Seminar, one writing specialist told of a teacher on an assessment team studying Hawiian children's writing. The team was evaluting informative papers on the topic, "How to Ride a Surfboard." These papers were to be assessed for their communicative effectiveness, i.e., could the reader understand the sequence of steps and terms used to describe surfboard riding? Unfortunately, one of these evaluators had trouble remembering the importance of grading for communicative effectiveness: she wanted to give a student who had written a short story about a surfer--without explaining how to ride a surfboard--an A for his good grammar, spelling, and punctuation.

To evaluate children's and adolescents' writing in terms of its communicative effectiveness, we first need to know how children learn to pursue communicative goals and how their communicative efforts can be improved. Fascinating research on this topic is being done now in a variety of academic fields--English, reading, psychology, education, and communication. This article describes some of this research and then shows how this research forms a basis for elementary and secondary writing instruction.[1]

In general, researchers know that children's behavior is influenced by both environmental and developmental forces. The research discussed here will be on developmental forces--particularly those processes that lead to a child's cognitive maturation.[2]

As children grow older, they tend to develop more sophisticated reasoning skills. This well-known tenet of Piagetian thought has been supported by considerable research in and outside the classroom. Like other cognitive skills, communicative skills become more sophisticated and sensitive as children grow to maturity. For example, older children tend to have a broader range of strategies for communicating than do younger children. In a study by Jesse G. Delia and Ruth Anne Clark of the University of Illinois, children ages six to twelve were shown pictures of a smiling man and a grumpy man. Next, they were asked to identify the men's emotional states and then say how they would persuade each man to return their ball if it rolled into his yard. Eight year olds could typically distinguish the two men's emotional states and indicate that persuading the grumpy man would be more difficult than persuading the smiling man, but they could not say how they would overcome this difficulty. Ten and twelve year olds, on the other hand, could often describe the communicative strategy they would use. For example one twelve-year-old boy said: "With the grumpy man, you'd be afraid to ask and you'd be backing off, but you could get him to get the ball by being nice. You'd change tone of voice for the man. And you'd probably need to blame it on someone else; tell him that you were playing with some kids and they threw it over the fence by accident."[3]

But although children's communicative skills improve with maturity, teachers and researchers know all too well that children of the same age often have different levels of communicative ability. A dramatic example of these individual differences comes from a study by Barry Kroll, an English professor at Indiana University. Kroll analyzed the writing skills of nine-year-old children in Bristol, England--all of whom has similar socio-economic backgrounds.[4] Among other skills, Kroll looked at the children's abilities to persuade. For one writing assignment he told the children to write a persuasive letter asking a hypotehtical "Mr. Fisher" to adopt a puppy owned by the writer. The children were told to pretend that Mr. Fisher was a fifty-five-year old farmer whom their grandfather knew, and to write a letter that would make Mr. Fisher want to own the puppy. Here are two of the letters Kroll collected:

> Dear Mr. Fisher,
>
> My name is Nicola. I am writing to ask you if you would like a Jack Russell puppy. You see my grandfather lives in the cottage next to you and he said you keep sheep and I thought you could train him to look after the sheep. I call my puppy William but you can change it. He is very quick at training. I have already trained him to sit and to come. One day my uncle was going in for a sheep dog contest but his sheep dog fell ill. So he asked me if he could take William in the contest . . . . William won third prize. He is about ten weeks old. But if you don't want him to look after the sheep maybe your children would like him. I know you got children because my grandfather told me. You would spend about one pound fifty on food each week if you would like him please tell my grandfather and will tell me and I will deliver him I am selling him for ten pounds. But if you buy him a

brown lead he will chew it. So what ever you buy him make sure its blue. I enclose a phothgrath.

Dear Mr. Fisher,

My grandfather has told me about your farm and you needed a dog well I have a dog a she has just had puppies and I would like to give one of the puppies to you the puppies name is Jovis.

["Elizabeth"]

(Kroll, in press)

Kroll and other writing researchers look at these and similar letters and wonder, why does Nicola know that she should state the purpose of her letter right at the letter's beginning, whereas Elizabeth does not seem to know this useful and audience-adaptive convention? Why is Nicola able to list aspects of her puppy that might appeal to Mr. Fisher, whereas Elizabeth's letter reflects no awareness of the need for persuasion? Why is Nicola somewhat aware of letter-writing conventions ("I enclose a phothgrath [sic].") and the potential benefits of persuasiveness ("I am selling him for ten pounds"), while Elizabeth is apparently oblivious to both these forms of knowledge?

Answers to these questions are complex and tentative. But although Kroll's and other researchers' findings about writing development are still being refined, they do have implications for writing instruction, particularly since current research indicates that writing may be viewed as one part of a child's overall communicative development. According to this research, same-age children and adolescents may have different levels of communicative skill because they have different skills for (a) understanding people, (b) understanding subject matter, and (c) constructing messages.

When social scientists first began studying children's communicative skills, they concluded that the differences in younger and older children's abilities were primarily due to older children's increased knowledge about people. For example, Delia and his associates in speech communication found that when asked to describe two familiar peers, one liked and one disliked, younger children could give far less information than older children. Further, younger children tend to use more physicalistic and activity-oriented descriptions ("He's short. He plays soccer."), whereas older children were more likely to use personality-oriented descriptions ("He's nice but competitive"), personality information being generally more useful for understanding others.[5]

Skill in understanding others is certainly a very important determinant of communicative skill. Indeed a Purdue professor, Brant R. Burleson, has found a strong relationship between children's understandings of others and their skill at comforting communication (e.g., comforting a friend who did poorly on a test or calming a sibling frightened by a scary movie).[6] But skill in understanding others is not the only determinant of communicative skill. Subject matter knowledge--and skill in discerning relevant aspects of a subject--also influences the effectiveness of children's communication, particularly their informative communication.

Just as "people sensitivity" is highly related to comforting communication, so skills for analyzing subject matter are related to informative communication skill. As teachers know all too well, young children enjoy learning "facts" about their world--facts about dinosaurs, dolls, sea shells, foreign countries, animals, and sports. Command of such knowledge builds vocabulary and analytic skills; consequently, it gives children some of the resources and motivation necessary for being good informative and persuasive communicators. Subject matter knowledge may also help children to be effective persuaders: in the two letters from Kroll's study, we saw that Nicola displayed more factual knowledge about puppy care then did Elizabeth.

In addition to understanding people and commanding subject knowledge, researchers say that children's communicative processes are affected by their message strategy skills. By message strategy skill, researchers mean such things as knowing that comparing the unfamiliar to the familiar is a useful tactic for informative communication, or knowing that in persuasion, it's a good idea to describe the benefits the audience will enjoy if they agree to the recommended action.

A host of studies have shown that message-strategy skills play a great role in the success of children's communication, and that the general phrase, "message-strategy skills," umbrellas a mass of communicative talent, some of which the average five year old commands! One way of talking about these skills is to say they involve communication what's, who's, how's, when's, and why's--the "5 w's."[7] For example, children may fail at communication tasks either because they do not know how to construct a good message, or because although they know how to use the required strategy, they do not realize when to use the strategy unless told to do so. In one research report, Steven Asher and Allan Wigfield, two developmental psychologists, described studies where children were asked to play a "choosing pictures" game.[8] Typically, these games involve a speaker and listener who each have a large cardboard sheet containing a set of similar figures--clowns, sail boats, or other familiar objects. Each set of figures in an array of essentially similar objects that differ from one another in a few observable ways. For example, there may be two clowns with one button each, but only one of these two will have long shoes. In a choosing-pictures task, speakers try to describe one figure in the set so that the listeners can select it from among its similar counterparts.

According to Asher and Wigfield, some kindergarteners find the "speaker" role in this game difficult because they do not know that they should compare and contrast the clowns or sail boats before trying to form a message. These children first need to be taught how to perform this task. Other kindergarteners and most older children know how to construct compare-contrast messages but will often fail to use this knowledge when playing the game. These children fail to see the situation as one requiring a strategy they command.

This notion that communication breakdowns may occur because of both how- and when-skill deficiencies is further supported by Clark and Delia's research on persuasive communication. Some children have difficulties with the puppy task because they do not know how to persuade.[9] Primary school children can often do little more than say, "Please, please, please, take this puppy," a strategy that reflects no awareness of the importance of focusing on benefits to the other when persuading. Somewhat older children may realize that something more than "Please, please, please" needs to be said but not fully know what that something might be. Generally, it is only in the post-primary grades that children realize strategies such as meeting counter objections (recall Nicola's discussion of how little it would cost to feed the puppy), and--the most sensitive strategy--describing ways that the audience would benefit from the recommended action begin to occur to and be used by children. Yet even after learning to use these strategies, children may not know when to use them.

How can we teach children to master all the 5 w's of communication? Research on procedures for improving children's communicative skills indicates that teachers should structure their lessons so children are exposed to as many of the 5 w's skills as they can handle. For example, Grover Whitehurst and Susan Sonnenschein, two developmental psychologists, taught kindergarteners to play a choosing-pictures game.[10] Generally, these children did not know the how of the game--that players must use comparison-contrast analysis to assess and describe a figure to the listener--so the researchers taught them this message strategy. They also taught the strategy's why: "You need to say x so that your listener will know which picture you mean." Unfortunately, even after this how and why training, the kindergarteners still could not consistently use the strategy and play the game well.

Then, Whitehurst and Sonnenschein tried a new tactic: first they taught the children how to play the game and why the strategy worked. Once the children had played the game a few times, they taught them to think about what they had done by giving strategy-specific feedback. For example, they would say to a child: "Yes, that was a good thing to say because you told me how the picture with the star above it differs from the other pictures." Or, "No, that was not the right thing to say because you did not tell me how the picture with the star above it differs from the other pictures." After this training, kindergarteners learned to perform the choosing pictures game. Further, in a test of their skills one week later, Whitehurst and Sonnenschein found that the children retained this proficiency. Apparently the strategy-specific feedback plus rehearsal of comparison-contrast message strategy helped children to make the connection between what they were saying and why their message strategy worked.

To summarize, we can say that in general, as children grow older their communicative skills improve, but that children of the same age may have very different skills depending upon their understanding of people, subject matter, and message strategy, and that to improve children's communicative skills-- be they oral or written--teachers should structure their lessons around the 5 w's of communication.

Using the 5 w's for writing instruction can be challenging: it requires teachers to analyze their own assignments, making sure that they have realistic communicative goals, specified audiences, and explicit message strategies. However, this teaching method--like all methods--can become routine and easy with practice. Here are two sample lessons built on the 5 w's.

A Lesson on Giving Directions for Elementary School Students

As teachers know, children enjoy thinking about and planning for parties.

Planning a party calls for several types of informative writing--list making, invitation writing, and directions giving. Here are a few ways that the context of planning a party can be used to teach informative writing:

GOAL (the what): to give students from a nearby school directions to a party held at your students' school.

AUDIENCE (the who): Two children from a nearby school. Give your students a map showing the locations of the nearby school, your school, and the homes of the two children to be invited. Draw in landmarks throughout the map that your students would be familiar with, e.g., shopping centers, fast food restaurants, movie theaters. Tell your students that the two invited children will be coming from their school to your school by car and the invited children will be giving their driver directions from the maps and directions your students send them.

MESSAGE STRATEGIES (the how taught by doing): 1. Good directions generally make use of pictures and words. First have your students draw in the best route for their guests to follow. This drawn line should be easy to see.

2. Second, ask your students to think about where their guests will be coming from and what they will be thinking about. The guests will need their directions written from their school to your school, not vice versa.

3. Third, ask your students to think about places and streets that might be familiar to their guests. For example, the route might seem very clear if the written directions said, "Turn right on State Street, where McDonald's is," if the McDonald's is close to your guests' school.

4. Finally, have students check their spelling and accuracy for this assignment. Mistakes could confuse their guests.

STRATEGY-SPECIFIC FEEDBACK (the how taught by encouraging thinking): When students employ a strategy well say, "Good. You reminded your readers that the McDonald's is on the corner where he needs to turn. You used something he knew about in giving him new information." When students do not employ a strategy correctly, give them similar strategy-specific feedback.

MESSAGE-STRATEGY MASTERY (the when): Give students a variety of assignments requiring the strategies you taught for directions giving: have them tell a new student in their school how to get to important classrooms or, more challenging, see if they can apply the "use the familiar to explain the unfamiliar" in a different kind of "directions giving" task--writing to a younger child on how to bake cookies or put a model car together.

MESSAGE RATIONALES (the why): Encourage students to tell you why they used one strategy or another. Their answers should eventually indicate that they see a connection between message strategy, goals, and readers' needs, e.g., "I told her about the McDonald's on the corner because I knew she would remember the turn if I said it with a place she knows."

A Lesson on Persuasive Writing for Junior- and Senior-High Students

Persuasion is an important part of high school students' lives. They persuade their parents and teachers to give them more freedom, their friends loyalty, and the world patience! Remind your students that they *do* have persuasive skills; they may not know that they do. Here are some ways persuasive writing skills can be taught in the context of a lesson on letter writing:

GOAL (the *what*): to persuade parents to buy a TV set for your students' rooms[11]

AUDIENCE (the *who*): Students' parents or guardians. Tell your students to imagine themselves in the following situation: they are away from home, staying with a friend one week during the summer. This friend has a TV in his/her own room and your students decide they would like TVs for their rooms, too, so they write a letter persuading their parents to consider this request. Be sure to decide whether you will ask your students to write to a hypothetical set of parents with specified characteristics, a step that makes assessing the adaptiveness of your students' appeals easier, or whether you will have them write to their own parents, a step that makes the assignments more realistic but may make evaluation difficult if you do not know much about their parents' values and interests.

MESSAGE STRATEGIES (the *how* taught by *doing*): 1. Use the "hero" and "heroine" strategy: treat your readers as great people who can do important, generous things, not as villains or selfish individuals.

2. Describe the benefits your *readers* will receive if they act on your request.

3. Show that you are already a well-educated, well-schooled person by making sure your grammar, spelling, and punctuation are all correct.

STRATEGY-SPECIFIC FEEDBACK (the *how* taught by encouraging thinking): When students use a strategy well, say, "Good. You pointed out that your parents would benefit from purchasing you a TV since they would be able to watch the shows they like." When students do not use a strategy well, point out to them how they have failed to use the strategy by saying something like, "No, you told how *you* would benefit from the TV but not how your parents would benefit."

MESSAGE-STRATEGY MASTERY (the *when*): Give students a variety of persuasive writing assignments that all make use of these same two strategies. Be sure to let *them* try to figure out what strategies would be effective first before you suggest some. For example, have students persuade a company to return their money or fix a defective product, or have them write to a school official to request a change in an unpopular school policy.

MESSAGE RATIONALES (the *why*): Give students a form with the 5 w's listed on its lefthand side. Have them fill out this "Message Strategy Analysis" form before writing each of their persuasive writing assignments. By filling out such a form, they will see better the connection between writing and characteristics of people. A good answer to the "why" section of this form might look like this: "My parents think it's important for me to learn to make decisions on my own and to behave like an adult so I'll tell them that buying me a TV will give me a chance to learn responsibility, and that they are really broad-minded people for seeing the situation this way."

Finally, no matter what age-group you are teaching, remember that effective communication is always difficult. Adults often fail to give directions clearly or bumble persuasive efforts by begging or treating their audience as villains. By teaching writing as communication, you will be helping your students learn more about the needs of people around them, more about their own--often tacit--abilities as communicators, and more about the power of writing, the tool we use to connect ideas to people.

FOOTNOTES

[1] Primary school and pre-school teachers will probably find the suggested lesson in this article too difficult for their students, but the approach to writing instruction suggested here can be adapted to children in those two age groups. For primary school children see Donald H. Graves, "What Children Show Us About Revision," Language Arts 56 (1979), 312-319; for pre-schoolers see Linda L. Lamme and Patricia L. Denny, "A Writing Curriculum for Preschoolers," Daycare and Early Education, Fall (1981), 12-15.

[2] Readers interested in the effects of environment on writing skill development should see Barry M. Kroll, "Antecedents of Individual Differences in Children's Writing Attainment," in Explorations in the Development of Writing: Theory, Research, Practice, ed. Gordon Wells (Chichester, England: John Wiley, in press) and Marcia F. Whiteman, ed., Variation in Writing: Functional and Linguistic-Cultural Differences (Hillsdale, N.J.: Erlbaum, 1982).

[3] Jesse G. Delia and Ruth Anne Clark, "Cognitive Complexity, Social Perception, and the Development of Listener-Adapted Communication in Six-, Eight-, Ten-, and Twelve-Year-Old Boys," Communication Monographs 44 (1977), esp. pp. 332-334.

[4] See Kroll, note 2.

[5] Jesse G. Delia, Brant R. Burleson, and Susan L. Kline, "Developmental Changes in Children's and Adolescents' Interpersonal Impressions," Journal of Genetic Psychology, in press.

[6] Brant R. Burleson, "The Influence of Age, Construct System Development, and Affective Perspective Taking Skill on the Development of Comforting Message Strategies: A Hierarchical Regression Analysis," paper presented at the annual convention of the International Communication Association, 1981.

[7] This notion of "how" and "when" knowledge is presented in Grover J. Whitehurst and Susan Sonnenschein, "The Development of Informative Messages in Referential Communication: Knowing When versus Knowing How," in Children's Oral Communication, ed. W. Patrick Dickson (New York: Academic, 1981), pp. 127-141. The education scholar, Courtney Cazden, makes a similar distinction between "learning how" and "learning that"; see Child Language and Education (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1972), pp. 236-247.

[8] "Training Referential Communication," in Children's Oral Communication Skills, ed. W. Patrick Dickson, note 7.

[9] Ruth Anne Clark and Jesse G. Delia, "The Development of Functional Persuasive Skills in Childhood and Early Adolescence," Child Development 47 (1976), 1008-1014.

[10] Whitehurst and Sonnenschein, see note 7. For additional examples of oral tasks that could be adapted for writing instruction see W. Patrick Dickson and Janice H. Patterson, "Evaluating Referential Communication Games for Teaching Speaking and Listening Skills," Communication Education 30 (1981), 11-22.

[11] This lively situation--having students persuade their parents to buy them a TV--is used by the prominent developmental psychologist, John H. Flavell, and his associates to assess children's persuasive skills. See The Development of Role-Taking and Communication Skills in Children (New York: Academic, 1968), p. 136.

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PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS OF LANGUAGE LEARNING THEORY IN THE MIDDLE SCHOOL AND JUNIOR HIGH

by
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Middle school and junior high school represent a key time in the language development of students. As Lev Vygotsky has suggested in Thought and Language, p. 51, the nature of language development changes in late childhood and early adolescence from "biological to sociohistorical." Put simply, this means the emphasis in language learning shifts toward social learning situations, paralleling the shift to social development in the overall psychological and social development of students at this age. The learner tends to be less egocentric in outlook, and begins to seek experience from outside his/her immediate experience. Junior high and middle school students exhibit symptoms of this shift to social learning in their academic interests and achievements. In the area of language skill and understanding, the syntactic maturity of written sentences catches up with the syntactic maturity of spoken sentences sometime between the 5th and 8th grade (Constance Weaver, Grammar for Teachers, p. 15). In reading, this is the time of the junior high reading "craze," when students tend to voluntarily read more fiction than at any other time in their lives (Alan C. Purves and Richard Beech, Literature and the Reader, NCTE, 1972, p. 72).

The importance of attending to the language development of students cannot be overestimated. Rita Brause, in a summary of research on language development in junior high and middle school students in The English Journal, p. 64, presents these three hypotheses about language development.

1) language development affects cognitive development and vice-versa
2) our ability to understand language affects our understanding of the world and vice-versa
3) our ability to understand language affects our ability to use language

Given the importance of the middle school and junior high school time period in the development of our students, and the paramount importance of language development, a suggestion of classroom practices which should contribute to the development of students' language ability and understanding might be appropriate. These suggested practices will be consonant with accepted notions of language development and are practices aimed especially at the junior high and middle school student.

Though this material is not intended to be a technical explication of the research and theory in language learning, some basic descriptions of development, as manifested in language competence and use, will help to orient the reader. These descriptions should be helpful to the teacher in assessing students' level of ability. Again drawing on Rita Brause, there are four areas of development which can be observed in the language use of students (p. 64):

1) length of utterance: mature writers and speakers use longer sentences (not including run-ons or excessive coordination). Number 2 explains and qualifies this statement further.

2) depth of embedding: "The elephant runs" is less syntactically mature than "The pink elephant runs," because the second contains two prepositions: "The elephant runs," and "The elephant is pink." Notice that although "The pink elephant runs" is more compact than the two prepositions embedded in it, it is a longer sentence than the less syntactically mature sentence "The elephant runs" (cf. #1). Adjectival constructions (clauses and phrases) are difficult embeddings for junior high and middle school students.

3) cohesion and organization of ideas: increasing skillful use of sequencing, cause and effect, and relative clauses (The elephant which runs is pink).

4) functions of language: increasing demonstration of appropriate uses of expressive (for yourself), transactional (for sending messages), and poetic (for contemplation of experience) modes of discourse.

Put simply, students should be using longer sentences with more sophisticated embeddings, and showing greater awareness of audience and organization in writing, speaking, listening, and reading.

As a general note on teaching practices which enhance students' language development, emphasis should be placed on activity learning. Activities should be designed which allow the student maximum opportunity to read, write, speak, and listen. As Constance Weaver states in her book, Grammar for Teachers, "If you want students to read better have them read; if you want them to write better, have them write" (p. 5).

In the area of composition teaching, students at this age should be increasingly comfortable with transactional (for sending messages) modes of writing. The continued tendency toward expressive writing (which precedes transactional discourse developmentally) should not be discouraged, but it will mitigate some students' abilities to fully understand the nature of transactional discourse. Students should do both expressive and transactional forms of composition, and should aim their transactional writing at many different audiences. Developing a sense of audience, and appropriate writing for that audience, is an important step in the development of writing competence. Students should also be attending to organization in their writing, especially sequencing of various types and cause and effect relationships. The revising stage of the composing process is especially important for students at this age for the purpose of attending to matters of organization. This is especially true if the revising process takes place in a workshop format, and students are able to talk about one another's writing; the spoken dialogue usually results in students having a better understanding of the effect of their writing on an audience.

At the sentence level, students' sophistication of organization and level of syntactic maturity can be enhanced through the use of sentence combining techniques. The suggestion here is not to use sentence combining as an isolated exercise (though some sentence combining practice might be useful, even in isolation from composing), but as part of the revising assignment for composition assignments. Sentence combining can be used to constructively help students improve poor sentences, rather than writing "AWK" or "FRAG" in the margin. The circling of two or more sentences with the instruction to combine them can be helpful for student revision. Also of value is the demonstration of more complex embeddings drawn from students' essays, especially if the student has written a more sophisticated sentence as a result of revision. The teacher can also demonstrate, through sentence combining techniques, increasingly sophisticated constructions for her/his students.

A final note about the development of written language skills and understanding is that students' sophistication grows through attending to meaning first, and form second. In other words, students will use the relative clause first, and learn how to punctuate it later. Insistence by the teacher that students punctuate everything correctly under all circumstances will end up discouraging student use of more sophisticated constructions. The time to teach the proper punctuation of many grammatical constructions is after the construction is securely in the students' writing. The implication here, of course, is more attention to individual development as evidenced in students' writing, and less attention to whole-class grammar and mechanics lessons. Working with students on an individual basis need not be an overwhelming task, if one remembers that students usually can attend to only one or two writing problems at a time anyway. The teacher is not solving everyone's problems all at once, and not working with each student's total development as a writer, but attending to problems when needed and allowing the students to develop as writers through writing.

Reading development and sophistication of response to literature at this age level are dependent on the students' need for increased vicarious experience and increased language experience. An emphasis on wide reading of voluntarily selected material is appropriate for students at this age, and not just outside of the classroom. Sustained silent reading is a very good use of class time for reading development in students at this level. Also, students at this age (and probably at all ages) read at a much higher level of ability when they are reading something they are interested in. Wide reading of voluntarily selected materials can only enhance the students' reading abilities.

Developing sophistication in response to literature involves increasing ability to predict outcomes, infer character (especially when stereotypes are involved), and understand literary form. By literary form it is meant that students understand the differences between various literary types and genre; it does not mean literary structure. Students at this age seem cognitively incapable of making structural generalizations about literature, but they can distinguish types of literature and form of presentation. All of the above activities rely on increasing awareness of others, in social convention, on the part of students. Students must step outside themselves, put themselves in someone else's position, predict what might happen rather than what they want to happen in a story, and understand appropriate audience response to various forms of literature. Students are not expected to submerge their personal response to literature (in fact they are encouraged to develop personal response in their wide reading), but are increasingly made aware of the commonality of response to literature through comparison of their personal responses. The writing of personal response to literature, and the sharing of that personal response, are important components in the language experience and development of junior high and middle school students. While students use literature to expand their vicarious social experience, teachers can assist and direct the expansion of the students' linguistic and literary experience through assigning and suggesting and reading many varieties of literary form, language, type, and genre. Intensive study of a small number of literary works would definitely not be to the advantage of the students at this point of development. Formal literary essays do not help the students with their writing or their literary response sophistication at this level of development.

The ability to read for meaning involves understanding words in context. Emphasis on predicting the meaning of unfamiliar words from context is an important step in the development of reading maturity. Vocabulary study in the middle school and junior high school should not be done in isolation from reading, and that includes looking up vocabulary words in the glossary before reading the selection. Selections from the story containing the vocabulary words should be read and the class can practice predicting meaning from context. Both semantic and syntactic context clues can be examined in this way. The traditional study of prefixes and suffixes, syllabication, and grammar take on a new purpose in this context; students are not studying these topics as things in themsleves, but as ways of getting meaning from a text.

In the final analysis, the teacher's role is to provide a language rich environment for the middle school and junior high school student. Emphasis should be placed on active, productive language use, rather than analytical exercises. In-class publication of student work, whether it be in the nature of a "broadside" tacked on the bulletin board, a class literary magazine, or a "collected works" of each student set between construction paper covers, is an important part of making writing "real" to students. At the top of the scale, students might produce their own illustrated books, either individually or in teams and give them to the elementary school library.

The importance of dialogue in the development of language and thought suggests the value of drama in the middle school and junior high school curriculum. The junior high school student's well-known love of doing plays (at least reading plays in class) seems to be further evidence of both the change in the nature of language development at this age, and the significance of dialogue in that development.

It seems that more time is spent in the middle school and junior high school trying to get the students to shut up than there is trying to channel that verbal onslaught into something productive. For the sake of 'teaching" much student language learning is ignored, or at the worst stifled. The suggestion here is not to give up on teaching language, because not all language learning is "natural," but to adjust our teaching to allow these natural tendencies to work to the advantage of the students and ourselves as teachers of the English language.

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All of the above books and articles discuss language development in a K-12 framework; all contain practical teaching tips on reading and writing activities that promote language learning. Britton's Language and Learning is a "classic," and is somewhat theoretical. Moffett's Teaching the Universe of Discourse presents a composition curriculum based on language development theories. The Language Learning theme issue of Educational Leadership contains many short articles on reading, writing, and language activities related to language development. Constance Weaver's Grammar for Teachers discusses grammar and language teaching, and reading and writing from the viewpoint of language development. It is the single best resource on the list and is a book no English/Language Arts teacher should be without.

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QUESTIONS IN WRITING CONFERENCES: A RESEARCH STRATEGY THAT TEACHES

by
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Should teachers become researchers in their own classrooms, inextricably mixing the duties of the teacher and the reseacher? That question is more and more often being answered affirmatively. My experiences as a researcher in the classroom have confirmed for me the value of that practice. Since I began collaborating with my students to study the nature of the composing process and the relationship between writing and learning, I have improved my teaching; moreover, because I am actively engaged in the study of what I am doing as a teacher and a writer, I have a greater sense of professionalism and more enthusiasm for my work. As one example of how being a researcher in the classroom has informed and improved my teaching, I want to describe a questioning strategy that Dr. Richard Murphy, a colleague, and I developed for a research project and that we now use in writing conferences.

During the 1981-82 academic year at Radford University, with a grant from the Virginia Writing Research Center located at George Mason University, we conducted classroom-based case-study research to determine how students generated controlling ideas, or theses, for their papers and how they used ideas to guide the writing of essays. Knowing that we could not be with the students as they did all of their writing, we employed two strategies to help us collect data.

First, we required students to keep a log of all their activities as writers. This log provided us with information about their writing behavior while they were not in class under our observation. Second, we required each student to have a conference with one of us on each finished version of a paper. To facilitate our research, we emphasized asking questions about the students' writing processes and tasks in our conferences.

Neither of us had used conferences quite this way before, and as teachers we were a bit apprehensive about the strategy. While we hoped the conferences, or interviews, would give us information about how our students created and used main ideas for their papers, we simultaneously worried that asking questions to help us do research would interfere with our responsibility to teach. That was not the case.

When we listened to tape recordings of our conferences and received comments from our students expressing their opinions about the conferences' values, we learned that asking students questions about their intentions and their behavior as writers resulted in personalized and powerful teaching. During the conferences, we asked our students questions that were non-technical; that were free of our profession's jargon; that were non-directive and nonthreatening; and that were centered on the students' texts, perceptions of the rhetorical context, and practices as writers. While we were asking questions important to our research goals, we were also asking questions that helped our students understand their writing tasks more precisely and that facilitated their development of an ability to read and judge their own writing critically. Students in our freshman composition courses wrote expository papers (transactional or referential papers) about subjects, for purposes, and to audiences they chose. We think their making those choices enabled them to develop a stronger commitment to, and involvement in, their papers. Our questions, we now realize, had heuristic power. We asked students how they chose their subjects, how they generated their ideas, how their perceptions of the writing task and the rhetorical situation affected those things, and how they used their ideas to govern the writing of their essays.

We asked questions to focus students' attentions on three relationships: (1) the relationship between the writer and the subject; (2) the relationship between the audience and the subject; and (3) the relationship between the audience and the writer. Our research interests led us naturally to ask students why they had selected their subjects. We asked about their interests in and experiences with the topics they chose to write about. We also were curious about why of all subjects they could have chosen to write about, they selected what they did. When we asked those questions to discover something about the genesis of the students' ideas, students had the opportunity to explore their subjects anew and develop additional insights. We also asked students what audience they had chosen to address and why they thought their designated audience would be interested in their treatment of the subject. In questions about the relationship between the audience and the subject, we were searching for whatever influences the audience may have exacted on the formulation and expression of the students' ideas. During their responses to these questions students could discover for themselves aspects of a relationship they had overlooked. We also asked students what kind of relationship they shared with their audience; we were particularly interested in whether they had a clear sense of an audience and whether the perception of their relationship with the audience in any way shaped or influenced the structure or expression of the idea.

We believed that these questions were helping us as researchers; we learned that they were also helping us teach students some important lessons about writing. Students obviously need to understand what their subjects are, what their ideas are, and who their audiences are. Even more important, they need to understand what their audience's attitudes toward, feelings about, and needs in terms of their subjects are. How the audience will react to what writers have to say, how writers can design their papers to get the response they desire, how writers can establish an efficacious relationship between themselves and their audiences--these are matters that students (and other inexperienced writers) tend to overlook. Our questions about these relationships among the subject, audience, and writer helped our students learn how these parts of the rhetorical context interact to affect the style and even the substance of the writing.

Carol Cates' experiences during conferences on a paper illustrate the teaching possibilities of questions focused on the relationships among the writer, the subject, and the audience. Near the end of the quarter in November 1982, Carol had a conference on a paper in which she argued that the legal drinking age in Virginia should not be changed from eighteen to twenty-one years old. She was very certain about the identity of her audience and very clear about her purpose. At the beginning of the conference, she announced that her audience was:

> the House of Delegates of Virginia. A friend of mine's father is in the House. And my purpose is to convince that audience, those who feel that the law should be changed, that it should not be changed because eighteen year olds are considered legal adults and they should be mature enough to handle alcohol.

Carol has marshalled often-used arguments to support her contention: If eighteen year olds are mature enough to vote, then eighteen year olds are mature enough to drink; if eighteen year olds can fight and die for their country, they should be allowed to drink; if eighteen year olds are considered adults in courts of law, they should be considered old enough to drink. There was nothing extraordinary about the arguments that Carol had enlisted in her cause.

So I asked Carol what assumptions she had made about her audience's feelings about and knowledge of this topic. She revealed that she knew the audience had data suggesting that a greater number of serious and fatal traffic accidents are caused by people between the ages of sixteen and twenty-one who drive after drinking alcoholic beverages than are caused by older people who drive after drinking. Asked what she did in her paper to make that information seem less convincing or what she was able to say to counter that evidence, Carol responded that she had ignored that matter. Afraid it would weaken her own convictions, she said she deliberately did not think about or address that issue. Through questions and her responses, it became apparent to Carol that she had resisted examining her own position and the arguments the audience would use to counter her opinion because she did not really want to change the way she "felt" about the matter.

During the questioning, Carol, however, saw that her audience would not likely be persuaded unless she took into account their relationship to the subject. She had been writing the paper with only her relationship to the subject in full view. She decided to revise the paper and recognized that the substance of her paper could change as she began to consider her audience's relationship with the subject. In fact, when Carol revised the paper, she concluded by describing the decision to change the law as a difficult one, but in the end, she said that the law should be changed.

> It would be difficult to say that if an eighteen year old is responsible enough to be called a legal adult, he is not responsible enough to drink alcohol. However these privileges [those granted to adults] are many times not handled in a very mature way and are taken advantage of. Why then should an eighteen year old be given the right to drink so he can take advantage of it

> and maybe become the drunk driver who kills a mother
> and her baby?

Carol's experiences in the conference and during the revision of this paper were valuable precisely because they helped her learn about the interactive relationships among the writer, the subject, and the audience. Questions focused her attention on those relationships as they manifested themselves in her own essay.

Nicole Nardelli, another of our students, evaluated the conferences in this way during an interview at the end of a writing course:

> When you get in here and you have a conference with your teacher on a paper, you learn so much more as a student--to be learning--about how to write that paper and what you're doing wrong and just that you're--I have seen how my writing improves--I mean just in the three months--on that one paper that I revised, I mean that's a big difference, I think. For me it is, in three months. And you know, I don't think I would have learned that if I had just turned in the paper and you'd graded it and maybe said, "Look, this, this, and this is wrong," and I'd said "Well, ok." You know?

Nicole and many other students learned to write their papers better because through questions they had their attention focused on the crucial relationships among subject, audience, and writer. Although we initially decided to ask these questions to help us learn how students created their papers' controlling ideas and how they used those ideas to give shape to their papers, we have learned that those questions also taught very powerfully.

Questions and students' responses to them remain the heart of our conferences. The classroom research we did enriched our teaching in a number of ways. Certainly, the unanticipated strengthening of our conference strategy made our research valuable and helped convince us that classroom-based research can invigorate teaching and learning.

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A COMPARISON OF THE DIRECT INSTRUCTION METHOD AND THE CONTEXT METHOD OF TEACHING VOCABULARY TO HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

by
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ABSTRACT

Improving the vocabulary of students is a general goal for most high school classes, but English classes in particular assume the responsibility not only for increasing the students' store of words but also for developing skills used to acquire vocabulary. Although this objective is almost universally accepted by English teachers, the most effective methods for instructing in vocabulary have not been fully researched or clearly established. Many teachers, therefore, follow procedures whose effectiveness they question.

In this study the researchers compared the effectiveness of two methods: the direct instruction method and the context method. As a unit of literature was taught, twenty-five words from the literature were indirectly taught by having students use the context to understand the meanings of the new words (X). Twenty-five additional words, not found in the literature, were directly taught by drills and exercises (Y). Then a teacher-constructed multiple-choice test was given to measure the students' learning of the fifty words and to compare their learning of the words taught by context clues and those taught by direct instruction. Eight weeks later the test was repeated to compare the retention of the words taught by the two methods. The researchers then used a two-tailed t test to see if there was a significant difference between the two methods.

OBJECTIVES

1. To compare the effects of teaching high school students vocabulary by using the context method and the direct instruction method.

2. To compare after eight weeks the mean scores of words taught by the context method and the direct instruction method to see if there is retention.

HYPOTHESES

1. There is no significant difference between the mean scores on a teacher-constructed test for words taught by context method and for words taught by direct instruction method at the .05 level of significance for a two-tailed t test for independent measures.

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2. There is no significant difference after an interval of eight weeks between the mean scores on a teacher-constructed test for words taught by context and words taught by direct instruction at the .05 level of significance for a two-tailed t test for independent measures.

THEORETICAL BASIS

In the late 1960's in response to demands for more "open education" and more "student-oriented education," a large surburban high school, located north of Cincinnati, radically revised its organizational pattern and curriculum: changing from a semester structure with year-long courses to a trimester structure with twelve-week courses organized around specific topics. This change meant that the English Department no longer offered courses entitled English 9, 10, 11, and 12, which encompassed a number of language art skills, but offered such specialized courses as Vocabulary Study I and II, American Novel, Expository Writing, World Drama, etc.

One of the controversies that has arisen from this change raises questions about vocabulary development and the methods of instruction used. In the vocabulary classes, lists of words are directly taught with emphasis on active memorization. Students have expressed doubts about long-term retention of these words, saying that in later testing or reading they would recognize the word as having been on the study list but would not recall its meaning. Also, because of the vocabulary classes, the traditional vocabulary instruction accompanying literature has been dropped, based on the theory that if the student investigates the words through context clues as he reads, this "cognitive interaction" (1) will enable him to acquire the new words in a much more meaningful and long-term way than through direct instruction. Both of these methods are currently used: direct instruction in the vocabulary classes and context method in the literature classes.

Comparing the direct instruction method with the context method of teaching vocabulary juxtaposes the theories of the stimulus-response psychologists such as Throndike, Hull, Bruner, Skinner, and Brophy beside the theories of cognitive psychologists who find their roots in Piaget, such as Ausubel, Gagne, and Wittrock. (1) (2)

Direct instruction methodology is consistent with the stimulus-response precepts that learning is increased when the learner is active, when there is frequency of repetition, and when there is practice in varied contexts. Jerome Bruner contends, "The more formal the teaching, the more time the pupils spend working on the subject matter at hand. And, in general....the more time pupils spend working on a subject, the more they improve at it." (2) The term "direct instruction" may be defined as that methodology in which the teacher primarily controls the activities, uses lecture presentation, orients the activities toward information acquisition, structures the class into a large group, and drills for retention. (2) Specifically in vocabulary instruction, the teacher would utilize exercises in which the unknown word would be paired with familiar synonyms, new words would be categorized and associated with other known words based on the theory "that hierarchically organized information improves storage and retention of information" (1), cloze structures that would require the students to use the familiar words in the sentence, and sentences written by the students to use the new words.

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Exponents of Piaget, however, contend that much rote learning and formal instruction are meaningless and unlikely to have long-range generalized effects on cognitive development." (2) The context method is consistent with this view. The term "context method" may be defined as the methodology in which the teacher or text introduces the vocabulary items in such a way that the student should infer the meaning from the environment of the sentence and the word's formation. Generally, when this method is used, there is no further systematic instruction. Future encounters in the reading will occur to reinforce this initial learning. The Rumelhart, Lindsay, and Normal study of 1972 "seems to suggest support...that the context guided each learner to 'old information' present in his or her conceptual base; that the target word could then be assimilated into the system on the basis of individual background experiences." (1) Such adherents of the context method propose that the students' time is better spent reading than doing memorization-based drills and exercises.

Comparing these two methods also indirectly investigates the theories of student- and concept-oriented curriculum as suggested by Kimball Wiles (3) and competency skills- and cognitive knowledge-oriented curriculum as advocated by Robert Ebel, Harry Broudy, and John Palmer. (2) In The School of the Future Wiles asserts that basic skills such as vocabulary acquisition are learned by the time a student reaches secondary school and that the major thrust of the curriculum should be self-exploration and vocational preparation. In such a curriculum, directly instructed vocabulary classes would be considered unnecessary and inconsistent with the aims of the school. Acquiring new words through one's reading would be more appropriate. Although the "school of the future, has not materialized as Wiles envisioned, some of the elements of the philosophy were incorporated into curricular changes in the late 1960's as the English classes became specialized and thematically organized.

In recent years, however, demands from the public for accountability of teachers, for measurable achievement of students, and for improved scores on national tests, such as PSAT, SAT, ACT, and College Boards, have refocused the attention of educators from affective goals and returned it to instructional programs that emphasize attainment that can be measured. Direct instruction methods are advocated by theorists who follow these principles. (2)

LOCATION/POPULATION

Place: The high school selected for this study is a suburban school of 1,700 students in grades 10 through 12. A majority of the community's citizens are employed in skilled or professional jobs in industry. The population, which is less than one per cent minorities, is made up of 31 per cent upper middle class, 65 per cent middle class, and less than 4 per cent lower class economic groups.

Number of Individuals: Twenty-seven students began the project, but one student withdrew before Test 2 was given. The students who made up this class were 7 seniors, 7 juniors, and 13 sophomores, whose IQ scores range from 91 to 135 with a mean of 115. Reading scores on the 1980 Gates-McGinite Reading Test given at the beginning of the course indicated a range from grade 11.7 to high school graduate

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level , with only two students scoring below high school graduate level.

PROCEDURES

STEP ONE: Constructed a multiple-choice survey test of 50 words taken from a two-week literature unit (X) and 50 words taken randomly from 1964-1965 Readers' Digest "It Pays to Increase Your Word Power." These words were then culled by the teacher so as to not include any that were in the literature (Y)

STEP TWO: Administered the test.

STEP THREE: From the most missed words, paired 25 from X with 25 from Y missed with the same frequency to make the two lists to be used.

STEP FOUR: In the context method, the students were instructed to use key-words occurring near new words to work out the meanings as they read their literature assignments. Because 18 of the 25 X words occurred in poetry, they were directly examined orally by the group with the teacher asking for context clues which might lead to deducing the meaning. Students were asked to volunteer generalizations about the guessed meaning of the words. The teacher would suggest two or three precise definitions and ask the students to infer which the writer intended. Of the remaining 7 words, which were in prose selections, only 3 were discussed in class. All 25 X words occurred more than once in the assignments. Thus the context method did include more than the students' own utilization of the word as he read the assignment; there was correct-answer feedback in class. None of the 25 X items were on tests or quizzes.

The direct instruction method for the 25 Y words began with a pretest in spelling to acquaint the students with the pronunciation and check their spelling. The second exercise was matching of the words in groups of 5 to their definitions, primarily by using suffixes and parts of speech recognition. The class checked their guesses orally in class. The third exercise was a set of cloze sentences into which the student fit the 25 words and circled the context clues. The fourth drill was a list of words commonly associated with the new words to be matched. The fifth exercise asked yes/no questions about the words. The sixth exercise gave familiar antonyms of the Y words and the Y words scrambled in spelling. The seventh exercise was a creative writing assignment using the Y words and related to the current unit in literature. The final event was Test 1, the Y words on it counting as a quiz grade. The other exercises were awarded a homework point for each one completed, except for the writing, which was given a three-part quiz grade: mechanics, originality, and usage of new words each being given a grade.

STEP FIVE: Computed the mean scores for X words and Y words and used a two-tailed t test for independent measures to see if there is a significant level of difference at the .05 level of significance.

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STEP SIX: After eight weeks, re-administered the test.

STEP SEVEN: Computed the mean scores for X and Y words and used a two-tailed t test for independent measures to see if there is a significant difference at the .05 level of significance.

EVALUATION

1. On Test 1, the mean score for X words was 13.407; the mean score for Y words was 24.481. A two-tailed t test for independent measure indicated a t of 13.278. Because this number is greater than the t indicated on the Critical Values of t Chart, the null is rejected.

2. When the test was given again after eight weeks, the mean score for X words was 13.38; for Y words, 22.0. A two-tailed t test for independent measure indicated a t of 9.173. Because this number is greater than the t indicated on the Critical Values of t Chart, the null is rejected.

CONCLUSIONS

Since the scores on Test 1 for the Y words were almost twice as high as for the X words, it is readily apparent that these students responded very positively to direct instruction for this short unit. Several factors might have contributed to this significant achievement. One, the unit represented a novelty to the routine of class discussion of literature. Another, the easy work of vocabulary study is relief from this particular unit of literature--early 18th century--which is the most difficult selections of the course, partially because of the unfamiliar vocabulary. Also, grade awards were offered as incentives. All of these factors, however, are inherent in direct instruction of vocabulary when part of a literature course but would not be if direct instruction in vocabulary is the entire course. This higher scoring on Y words on the initial test was expected. Memorization of 25 items is an easy task for college-bound students.

However, that the difference in scores between the X words and Y words would remain after eight weeks was surprising. On the second test, the X words mean score remained virtually the same; the Y words decreasing merely by two items. This unexpected outcome leads the researchers to unexpected conclusions. The exercises used in the direct instruction of Y words apparently involved the students sufficiently that their learning was retained, at least for eight weeks. Evidently, there was enough assimilation that the words became more than just recognition items.

Because of these conclusions, the researchers have decided that direct instruction exercises such as were used in this project are an efficient means of teaching vocabulary items.

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SPELLING AND SYLLABLES

by
Patrick Groff

The relationships between the structural makeup of words and their spelling difficulty has received little attention so far from spelling experts. For example, one finds that the leading text of late on instruction in spelling (Hanna, Hodges and Hanna, 1971) does not provide such information. This book does not provide teachers with data about the relationships of the syllabic count of words and their spelling difficulty, nor with information about the spelling problems that the common inflections given words pose for children.

The Present Study

The study reported here was designed to provide teachers with such knowledge. This inquiry into word structure and spelling difficulty was divided into two parts. In the first part of this study it was determined what effect the differing syllabic lengths of words have on the spelling achievement of fourth-grade children. The second part of the present study found the percent of fourth-grade pupils who could spell root words correctly but who could not spell the common inflected forms of these words.

The data used in the present study came from the New Iowa Spelling Scale (NISS) (Greene, 1955). The NISS presents the percents of correct spelling of 5507 frequently used words by pupils in grades two through eight in 645 school systems across the United States. The percents of pupils in the NISS who correctly spelled grew, for example, were:

Grade	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
grew	2	11	46	57	76	83	88

Investigation One. To determine the spelling difficulty of words of varying syllabic lengths a sample was made of every fourth word in the NISS. Of this total of 1377 words:

38.0	percent had one syllable
38.8	percent had two syllables
16.4	percent had three syllables
5.5	percent had four syllables
1.3	percent had five syllables

The percents of correct spelling by the fourth-grade pupils in the NISS of these five categories of words were:

One-syllable words	51.2 percent
Two-syllable words	30.8
Three-syllable words	11.5
Four-syllable words	6.1
Five-syllable words	3.6

Investigation Two. An examination of the *NISS* revealed that there were 1408 words here with the common inflections *ed*, *s*, *es*, and *ing*. The spelling difficulty of these inflected words for the fourth-grade pupils in the *NISS* was then compared to the spelling difficulty for them of the root words from which these inflections were formed. It was found, for example, that 8 percent more of these pupils spelled *walk* correctly than spelled *walked* correctly. The percents of these pupils who could spell the root words from the *NISS* but who could not spell their inflected forms were as follows:

Inflected Form	*Percent*
ed as /t/ or /d/	13.7
ed as /əd/	9.1
s as /s/ or /z/	10.0
es	19.3
ing	13.1

Discussion of Findings

It is clear from part *one* of this study that one-syllable words are much easier for children to learn than are polysyllabic words. This finding suggests that spelling teachers should carefully consider the syllabic lengths of words when deciding which words will be presented for children to learn to spell. If this advice is not heeded children doubtless will be asked to attempt to learn to spell words with which they likely will have little chance of success. A recent spelling series (Cramer, et al., 1978), at fault in this respect, requires that children learn to spell words, such as the following, in the third grade. Alongside these words is the percent of children in the fourth grade from the *NISS* who actually could spell them:

beautiful	18%	disappear	3%	factories	5%
bicycle	5%	enemies	8%	typewriter	6%
chocolate	5%	exciting	19%	watermelon	17%

Part *two* of the present study indicates that children's abilities to spell common inflections is not ensured as a consequence of their learning to spell root words. It can be inferred, moreover, that the deficits found between children's abilities to spell root words and their common inflected forms appears to be the consequence of inadequate teaching. That is, it has been shown (Berko, 1958) that by age five children have mastered the inflectional rules involved in the present study. There appears to be little reason, therefore, why improved teaching cannot sharply reduce the deficiencies found between children's abilities to spell root words and their common inflected forms, *ed*, *s*, *es*, and *ing*.

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THE STORY OF HOW RESEARCH CAN AFFECT CURRICULUM DECISIONS

by
Dawn Anderson and Karolyn Burkett

A major problem in teaching today is that results of research are not readily available to teachers. Thus we continue to write programs, use methods and approach teaching without the benefit of proven knowledge in our field. When it became evident that we needed a new spelling program in the Newark Public Schools, our Language Arts Curriculum Development Committee decided to begin with a study of current research on spelling, rather than looking at available programs or texts. We think the results were worth the effort.

Over the summer the committee chair assembled a bibliography and some of the books and articles containing the research. Each committee member read several books and articles and listed specific research findings on spelling.

Each member reported findings to the entire committee. Much of what we learned was going to require major changes in our ways. Based on these findings the committee formulated a philosophy and rationale for the teaching of spelling K-12. Next we ordered from publishers copies of the research and our research-based philosophy.

The committee intended to select at least three spelling series to present to the entire elementary and language arts staff for consideration. The series adoption would be based on their evaluations. However, the committee found only one series which they felt reflective of the research. Interestingly enough that series was developed not by a publishing company, but by teachers in a school district. It was that series along with the research that the committee needed to present to the staff in a way that would convince them to adopt this research-based program.

A memo was prepared and sent to all elementary teachers and all secondary language arts teachers in preparation for a day of inservice. The memo presents 1) ten common practices not helpful in the teaching of spelling, 2) a district philosophy for the teaching of spelling, 3) a rationale which lists ten key research findings, 4) a bibliography of spelling research.

At the inservice enough texts were available for each teacher to examine copies for all grade levels. After a brief explanation of the program, committee members moved about, answering questions and explaining methods and rationale. On their evaluations forms, the teachers approved the recommended series and again and again expressed thanks and appreciation for the committee's efforts to find and bring the research to their attention.

The memo sent to teachers follows.

TO: All Elementary Teachers and
All Secondary Language Arts Teachers

FROM: Language Arts Curriculum Development Committee

RE: Spelling Program

DATE: January 4, 1982

IS YOUR METHOD OF TEACHING SPELLING RESEARCH-BASED?

Research shows that some common practices in the teaching of spelling are not helpful:

1. DON'T present words in syllable form.
2. DON'T point out the "hard spots".
3. DON'T teach word meanings during the formal spelling lesson.
4. DON'T teach spelling phonetically.
5. DON'T have students write words 5 times without a specific study method.
6. DON'T have students write in the air.
7. DON'T use the study-test method.
8. DON'T correct your students' spelling tests.
9. DON'T introduce spelling words in sentence or paragraph form.
10. DON'T spend more than 15 minutes a day on formal spelling.

SURPRISED? So were we!

Fitzsimmons and Loomer (1974) report that spelling improvement can be attained by

1. utilization of a research-based spelling program,
2. understanding of where teachers are most likely to err in their beliefs and practices,
3. increased use of research-supported practices, and
4. elimination of practices not supported by research.

It's not our fault that we haven't been teaching spelling the best way. Despite the great number of research studies conducted in spelling, little of the research has been available to teachers or been incorporated in spelling programs.

Education is too valuable, important and systematic to be left to chance. Teachers should know the specific procedures and useful techniques available in order to apply them in the classroom.

We have developed a philosophy and rationale. These plus a bibliography of spelling research are attached. Would you please read this material carefully before the January 18th Inservice Day. The Committee will present our recommendations at that time and you will have an opportunity to respond and ask questions in small group meetings.

mlp

SPELLING

District Philosophy:

Spelling has been found to be a developmental process and an essential component of the language program. It is therefore necessary that the Newark City Schools have a systematic spelling program. While positive reinforcement is important in all learning, it is vital in the teaching of spelling. The goal of the spelling program should be to develop in students the intrinsic value of correctness. Parents should be informed of the spelling program and procedures.

The spelling program of the Newark City Schools will be based on extensive research findings which include the use of: student corrected tests, test-study-test method, high frequency words presented in list form, the whole word approach, a systematic study method, a means for systematic review, specified weekly time limits, and only those rules which apply to a large number of words and have few exceptions.

Since spelling is a part of the total language program, students should have numerous opportunities to practice spelling throughout the curriculum, and to proofread their work in order to develop and internalize a better understanding of English spelling. (Hodges, 1979)

Spelling is a multisensory process. The teaching of spelling should include visual, auditory, kinesthetic and tactile practices. (Hodges, 1979)

Rationale:

Fifty years of spelling research have continued to assert that the following practices are the most helpful in the teaching and learning of spelling. These practices, therefore, are the basis of the spelling program of the Newark City Schools.

(1) The formal spelling program in 1st grade and beginning 2nd grade should consist of spelling readiness activities. (Read, Allred & Baird) Students should be encouraged to invent their own spellings and begin to internalize generalizations about spelling through their own writing and through spelling games. The introduction of word lists will begin in mid-second grade.

(2) The self-corrected test, under the direction of the teacher, is the single most important factor in learning to spell. T. Horn (1946); Louis (1950); Beseler (1953); Tyson (1953); Thomas (1954); Schoephoerster (1962); E. Horn (1963); Christine and Hollingsworth (1966).

(3) The test-study-test method is the most effective method of teaching spelling. Kingsley (1923); Gates (1931); Blanchard (1944); T. Horn (1946); Edwards (1951); Shubik (1951); Fitzgerald (1953); Hibler (1957); Montgomery (1957); Witty (1969).

(4) The use of high-frequency lists (5,000 words) in the formal spelling program provides students the opportunity to learn 99.2% of all words used in child and adult writing. Thorndike (1921); E. Horn (1926, 1939, 1960); Hollingsworth (1965); T. Horn (1969); E. Horn and Otto (1954).

(5) Introducing spelling words in list form is the most successful method. Winch (1916); Hawley and Gallup (1922); McKee (1924); E. Horn (1944, 1954, 1963); Strickland (1951).

(6) Learning words by the whole word method is a better technique than learning words by syllables or by phonic rules. Foran (1934); Fitzgerald (1951); Jackson (1953); T. Horn (1969a, 1969b); T. Horn (1947, 1969b); Humphrey (1954); E. Horn (1919, 1954, 1957, 1960, 1963); Archer (1930b); Sartorius (1931); King (1932).

(7) Students should be taught a systematic method for studying spelling words. E. Horn (1944, 1954, 1960); Fitzgerald (1951, 1954); T. Horn (1969b).

(8) The program should be taught a systematic method of review. Fitzsimmons and Loomer (1974).

(9) Time allotted to the formal spelling program should be limited to 60 to 75 minutes per week. Larsen (1945); T. Horn (1947); E. Horn (1960).

(10) Only rules which apply to a large number of words and have few exceptions should be taught. E. Horn (1967).

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SPEAKING WORDS AND WRITING WORDS: THE FRAGILE RESEARCH

by
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It is quite clear to the writing skills teacher that the speaking process and the writing process differ and differ radically. Speaking is oriented to hearing and writing to vision. Speaking is temporary, localized within time and space, linked to social situations. Writing has permanency, communicates across time and space, and is linked to non-social situations.

Ordinarily, speaking occurs as impromptu dialogue and discusses non-technical topics (e.g., daily experiences); little or no serious thought is elicited, precision is usually unnecessary, and the aim is to socialize. Writing usually occurs as deliberative monologue and usually discusses technical topics (e.g., literature, biology, philosophy); the aim is to communicate specialized information and precision is thus crucial.

In addition, the relevance which language has within a speaking situation differs according to the situation: e.g., though language is essential during a class discussion or a committee meeting, it is without a similar consequence to the communicator who is speaking as he or she is fixing dinner, driving to the library, or painting the house. In a writing situation, however, language is always essential, is always the communicator's single focus.

Though it is thus clear that the speaking process and the writing process do differ, the degree to which spoken language and written language differ is unclear. Information describing this linguistic disparity ought to aid the writing skills teacher because he or she is teaching communicators familiar with spoken language and the speaking process and unfamiliar with written language and the writing process. Information on the writing skills student's experience and/or inexperience with given language traits would allow the writing skills teacher to build on the student's experience, to focus initially on familiar (i.e., spoken) language traits and ultimately on unfamiliar (i.e., written) language traits, and thus to bridge the disparity dividing spoken language and written language.

If, for example, a higher frequency of adverbial elaboration (words, phrases, or clauses) characterizes spoken language, the writing skills student would quite likely be experienced with this linguistic trait; little class time focusing on adverbial elaboration would thus be necessary. If a higher frequency of adjectival elaboration (words, phrases, or clauses) characterizes written language, the writing skills student would quite likely be inexperienced with this linguistic trait and thus class time might wisely be given to exercises soliciting adjectival elaboration and illustrating that this unfamiliar adjectival elaboration is analogous to the familiar (and earlier covered) adverbial elaboration.

The disparity between spoken language and written language has inspired no little empirical research; however, the findings, as well as the language corpus solicited and the communicators assessed, differ inquiry to inquiry. In the research on noun frequency, for example, the paired inquiries of Mann (1944) and Fairbanks (1944) discover written language has a higher noun frequency; Green (1958) ascribes a higher noun frequency to spoken language; DeVito (1967) ascribes a higher noun frequency to written language; Portnoy (1973) discovers no differenc between spoken language and written language noun frequency; and Felty (1974) assigns again to written language a higher noun frequency.

A similar discord plagues the language corpus and the communicators assessed. A sampling of the inquiries illustrates this point. Borchers (1927) examined ten famous writers/speakers, comparing their delivered speeches on given topics with their writings on similar and different topics. DeVito (1964) used the published articles of ten speech instructors, comparing these materials with transcriptions of electronically recorded oral discussions with the authors on their respective articles. Using a different technique, Moses (1959) asked college students (thirty-three men and thirty-three women) to write two narrative essays (writing in class without preparation and timed for thirty-five minutes), one essay on a pleasant topic and one on an unpleasant topic; three weeks later, he asked the same students to give a timed three-minute impromptu speech on each of the experiences previously discussed in writing, with speakers speaking into a tape recorder and with only the equipment operator visible to the speakers. Golub (1969) solicited a language corpus using a single topic and fifty-five high school students, assigned either to speak prior to writing or to write prior to speaking. Students were given two minutes of preparation time before writing in class for twenty-four minutes and before speaking to the class for four minutes, with hidden microphones recording their delivered speeches.

Obviously, language collected within widely differing situations and with widely differing communicators proscribes a simple and still credible interpretation of the miscellaneous findings, and this disorder does little to motivate the writing skills teacher to examine the research and to discover the important information on the teaching of writing which the inquiries might yield.

To discover solid empirical information which has clear relevance to the writing skills teacher, I assessed twenty-six empirical explorations of difference between spoken and written language (Dragga, 1982). In a microcosmic beginning to the wider inquiry which is necessary, my research covers only inquiries assessing English word-level traits (i.e., word diversity and word-class frequency). Information on single lexical distinctions as well as phonological versus graphological distinctions is omitted. Research on child language is also omitted.

The findings of the twenty-six empirical explorations cover twenty linguistic traits: word diversity, nouns, noun modifiers, numerical words, pronouns, persona pronouns, first person pronouns, second person pronouns, third person pronouns, verbs, tense and aspect, voice, adverbs, prepositions, conjunctions, contractions, negatives, interjections, personal words, and adjective/verb quotient or verb-adjective ratio. A "miscellaneous" class covers linguistic traits which only a single inquiry assesses.

In my examination of the twenty-six inquiries, I established criteria for determining the relevance of a given inquiry's findings to the writing skills teacher. The ideal inquiry would assess spoken language with which the writing skills student is likely to be experienced (i.e., dialogue, discussing non-technical topics, occurring within a social situation, essential or non-essential to the situation, composed impromptu and by communicators unskilled at writing) and would assess written language with which the writing skills student is likely to be inexperienced (i.e., monologue, discussing technical topics, occurring within a non-social situation, essential to the situation, composed through deliberation and revision and by communicators skilled at writing).

Of the twenty-six empirical explorations, however, no inquiry assesses this ideal language corpus. No inquiry assesses spoken language discussing non-technical topics versus written language discussing technical topics. No inquiry assesses spoken language communicators unskilled at writing versus written language communicators skilled at writing. No inquiry covers non-essential spoken language. Only twice is spoken language dialogue versus written language monologue assessed. Only seven inquiries solicit impromptu spoken language and deliberative written language. The findings of the inquiries describe a spoken language corpus and a written language corpus which differ little, thus minimizing the linguistic disparity likely to be discovered, as well as minimizing the relevance of the findings to the writing skills teacher.

In addition, the criteria according to which words were tallied and classified differ inquiry to inquiry; unexplained and partially explained criteria also occur. The differing findings, as a consequence, yield seriously limited insights because a valid interpretation and comparison of findings is proscribed. The five inquiries assessing noun frequency illustrate this point. The paired inquiries of Mann (1944) and Fairbanks (1944) consider a single word as a letter-grouping with blank space on either side, including initials, abbreviations, and hyphenated words, though information is unclear on the consideration given to contractions; their research considers nouns as including gerunds, though information is unclear on the inclusion or exclusion of proper nouns and nouns functioning as adjectives. Green (1958) tallies all proper nouns and adjectives, contractions, and numbers as single words, and classes as nouns all words functioning as subjects, direct or indirect objects, objects of prepositions, or words following a linking verb and the equivalent of the noun preceding the verb. DeVito (1967), using a language corpus earlier solicited (DeVito 1964), considers words traditionally classed as nouns, as well as gerunds, reflexive pronouns, and indefinite pronouns with the endings -one, -body, or -thing, and tallies as a single word a letter-grouping with blank space on either side, including figures and hyphenated words. Portnoy (1973) tallies as a single word a letter-grouping with blank space on either side, including hyphenated words, and tallies numerals according to their spelled version, with 21 through 99 hyphenated; this inquiry considers nouns as including proper nouns and gerunds and as excluding possessive nouns and adverbs with noun characteristics. Felty (1974) tallies contractions as two words and considers nouns as including proper nouns and gerunds and as excluding possessive nouns. The differences (or the similarities) in the findings on noun frequency might thus only be the consequence of the differing criteria according to which the inquiries tallied words and/or classified words as nouns.

In several inquiries, also, the empirical design is amiss (e.g., failure to blind the communicators being assessed, or the people soliciting and assessing the language corpus, to the inquiry's aims). Several inquiries edit the spoken language corpus, omitting vocalized pauses and hesitations, meaningless sounds, partial words, repetitions, interjections, asides, and filler expressions, thus yielding the spoken language corpus similar to the written language corpus prior to assessing their linguistic disparity. Several inquiries, using visible microphones and recording machines, aim to solicit impromptu spoken language;

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however, spoken language is usually unrecorded, and a visible microphone or recording machine is likely to inhibit the speaking process, introducing a major or minor degree of deliberation (differing according to the communicator) to the spoken language corpus.

In addition, several inquiries give findings without assessing their statistical significance, thus proscribing valid generalization because replication of the research might yield radically differing findings. Of the three empirical explorations which ascribe a higher noun frequency to written language, only DeVito (1967) gives statistically significant findings. (The inquiry ascribing a higher noun frequency to spoken language also gives statistically significant findings, as does the inquiry which discovers no difference between spoken language and written language noun frequency.)

It is thus clear that the empirical explorations assessing spoken language versus written language word diversity and word-class frequency give limited and empirically fragile findings without clear relevance to the teaching of writing. The writing skills teacher desiring solid information is given only frail guesses, and using frail guesses as a guide to teaching is seriously misguided. Empirical research which does aid the writing skills teacher is, as a consequence, still necessary.

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THE FEMININE VOICE: RESEARCH ON GENDER AND WRITING

by
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Symons: There are stories written by women that are nonspecifically from a woman's point of view. Elizabeth Ferrars, for example. One wouldn't know whether her books had been written by a woman. In Celia's case, and in Daphne du Maurier's, the opposite is true. One has no doubt by page ten that the book was written by a woman.

. . . .

Curry: Regardless of what people say, there is such a thing as femininity in writing, and there is a charm in writing from it.

Fremlin: It may turn out that men and women are not the same after all.

Dilys Winn, Murderess Ink[1]

The above exchange, a teatime discussion by a group of mystery writers about whether there is a feminine or masculine voice in mystery writing, typifies popular beliefs about the role of gender in writing. For every Symons who believes that the sex of the writer is a negligible factor, or is, at best, a slippery concept, there are dozens of Currys and Fremlins who believe the writer's sex is a significant variable, that men and women do not write the same way. Fascinating though these discussions may be, however, they would be little more than grist for teatime conversations were it not for the recent controversy about whether, in fact, writing can be feminine and whether there is charm in writing that way. A substantial body of work, based on people's impressions about how women write, suggests that there are recognizably feminine rhetorical structures and that women are handicapped by using them. Opposing this anecdotal evidence is empirical research which, while sparse and unsystematic, finds that women are not handicapped writers at any level and that there are few significant sex differences in writing.

Clarification of this controversy is crucial for composition instruction and research. If women writers are handicapped by writing like women, then special instruction in composition should be directed toward them, much in the way that assertiveness-training and management development seminars are used in business to teach women supposedly male styles of managing. On the other hand, if women have no real handicaps as writers, the time and energy required for compensatory writing programs should be better spent elsewhere. What this "elsewhere" might be I will develop in the course of this essay, as I define first, what people mean by "writing like a woman" or "femininity" in writing and second, as I summarize the findings of research and its implications for writing instruction.

The most salient feature of what has been described as the feminine voice in writing--and I am confining myself to essay writing--is its lack of asser-

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tiveness and authority. The belief is widespread that women lack authority as writers because they are too sensitive to the demands of their audience, too eager to please and so afraid of appearing threatening that they produce bland, neutral writing or writing that develops an idea so tentatively and indirectly that readers have difficulty abstracting a main idea. Women, in effect, write as if they were writing for a hostile audience, in particular, a hostile male audience. Or so many women writers believe. Virginia Woolf, for instance, was aware of the effect writing for a male audience had on her writing. Her first unfavorable review of a book by a male writer was especially troublesome for her because her Victorian upbringing taught her to be kind to men. While she wrote, the voice of what she called the "Angel of the House" would whisper, "Be sympathetic; be tender; flatter; deceive; use all the arts and wiles of our sex."[2] The effect of this message was so devastating that Woolf saw killing the voice of the Angel as a primary task of every woman writer.

Even when a woman writer gets over her fear of intimidating male audiences, she still has problems with authority, chiefly in her need to establish herself as a "*voice to be trusted*," according to Elaine Reuben, who believes the problem is particularly acute for a woman writing about topics drawing attention to herself as a woman.[3] In an attempt to establish themselves as voices to be trusted, women sometimes take steps that are guaranteed to destroy their credibility, like trying to overwhelm their audience with information as evidence of their authority or being so indirect that they avoid claims to authority altogether. Even Margaret Mead has been criticized for these offenses by Diana Trilling in her 1950 review of Mead's first book on sex roles, *Male and Female*.[4] Trilling objects to Mead's long introduction in which she works to establish her authority as an anthropologist, and she especially objects to the "expository" incoherence in Mead's writing, to the "difficulty of following the main line of its meaning from sentence to sentence and page to page" (p. 52). Trilling finds Mead is not alone in her problem; the writing of otherwise talented women is "obscured by private reference, hidden patterns of reasoning, excessive discussion, overmodification of idea, and other forms of nondeclarativeness" (p. 53).

Although the "feminine" writing described thus far applies to the work of professional writers as it has been analyzed by other professional writers, the same features obtain in women students' writing. Describing a phenomenon among women students at Harvard and Yale that she calls the "Griselda complex" (after Chaucer's Patient Griselda, who put up with every possible abuse from her husband), Joan Bolker suggests that they let the pressure to be "good girls" overly influence their writing, which is neat, tidy, and dull as a result.[5] Another limitation attributed to women students by Sheila Oritz Taylor is an inability to write persuasive essays. Because women are socialized to be conciliatory, Taylor believes, when they reach the writing classroom they cannot play the combative, argumentative writer's role demanded by many college textbooks. Retreating into confusion, women students then produce essays that are too personal, too intuitive, and too equivocal.[6] In fact, Margaret B. Piggott believes that women students rely too much on personal experience to develop their essays and need extra help learning how to generalize beyond their own experience, a conclusion she reached after analyzing freshmen placement essays at Oakland University.[7]

Most recently, some writing instructors have observed that older women students have these problems to a greater degree and, in addition, have structural problems as well. Their students, enrolled in "Learn & Shop" writing

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classes that meet in shopping malls, have prompted these remarks: "Without wanting to fall into sexist stereotypes, instructors have commented that the typical Learn & Shop student wants to say too much in her essays. The result is that while the essays are brimming with numerous examples, anecdotes, details, and descriptions, paragraph unity is often destroyed, topic sentences are contradicted, and the patterns of development are illogically ordered. . ."[8] Like their younger or more professional counterparts, these women writers try too hard: they overload their writing with detail in order to be taken seriously as authoritative writing voices, all the while undercutting their effectiveness, especially with the male instructors of their writing classes.

These descriptions of what it means for a woman to write like a woman culminate in Thomas J. Farrell's essay, "The Female and Male Modes of Rhetoric."[9] Although his work was preceded by a similar essay by Karlyn Kohrs Campbell, "The Rhetoric of Women's Liberation: An Oxymoron,"[10] working independently of each other, Campbell and Farrell describe similar rhetorical structures which, they believe, are more likely to be used by women. The female mode views the essay as a process rather than a product, as it attempts to share with readers the process of thinking and the experiences the writer went through before she reached her conclusions about the topic, so that readers can come to accept the validity of her main idea. The writer using the female mode avoids direct assertions which may threaten or alienate her readers. Beginning with a confessional anecdote that is an admission of vulnerability instead of a formal introduction and thesis, the writer develops the body of the essay by presenting a large number of supporting details without giving readers clear guidelines about how to view them. If a conclusion is offered at the end of the essay, it is only a tentative one. The female mode thus eschews polemicism and proceeds implicitly, unlike the male mode, which is the stance advocated in many writing texts. The male mode proceeds explicitly, as the writer begins with an introduction with an argumentative thesis statement and develops the essay by acknowledging and attacking opposing points of view, and by using logic, facts, and accepted truths as evidence in support of the thesis, concluding with a strong restatement of the thesis.

Although neither Farrell nor Campbell believe the female mode or women's rhetoric has a very wide application because it is so unassertive, they feel it is a suitable rhetoric for emotionally charged situations where its indirection can produce reconciliation. But beyond that, Farrell believes its use would handicap women writers because the female mode is not featured in textbooks nor is it the style of academic writing, making it therefore unlikely to be assigned or accepted.

Still, however intriguing and suggestive they are, the weakness of these assumptions about how women write when they write as women is that they are not supported by empirical data. One of the truisms of research on sex differences has been that women score higher on tests of verbal ability, according to the classic review of research by Eleanor Maccoby and Carol Jacklin, The Psychology of Sex Differences,[11] and although they qualify their findings by pointing out that girls score higher on tests before the age of three and after age 10, with similar scores for girls and boys between those years, their review of students 16 or 17 or older shows that for 19 meausres of verbal ability, seven yield higher scores for women, 12 show no sex differences, and none has higher scores for men. While Maccoby and Jacklin's data cannot be used to prove that women are verbally superior to men, it does not indicate in any way that women are verbally inferior to men.

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Other empirical studies support this trend. An experiment testing for sex differences in syntactic maturity and usage skills of eighth graders found no sex differences in syntactic maturity but did find significant sex differences in usage, with boys making more usage errors than girls.[12] Two studies of high school students, however, in which sets of essays were graded holistically by several examiners, showed that girls were significantly more likely to receive higher grades for their writing,[13] although W. Don Martin's interpretation of his data is that the boys received lower grades because they were more "independent, argumentative, and even rebellious in their treatment of the topic," whereas the girls were more "conventional and expository" (p. 46).

Studies of college student writing also offer no evidence that women are handicapped writers. A dissertation on college student writing by Betty-Lou Waters showed that English instructors were able to guess the sex of the writer a significant number of times in several sets of descriptive essays by freshmen ("Sex-Based Differences in the Written Composition of Freshmen Students at Middle Tennessee State University," Diss. Middle Tennessee State University, 1976, p. 208). Her analysis of the results indicates the instructors were able to predict the writer's sex because the female student writer "has a clear conception of the reader" and a "clarity and consistency of tone" lacking in the writing by male students (p. 181). Unlike the instructors of the Learn & Shop program, she believes that women students are better organized and have a better sense of structure than the men: "It is apparent that most females began their papers with a clearer idea of what they were going to include and were less apt to 'tag on' significance at the end" (p. 210).

Two studies on stylistic differences between male and female students yielded no sex differences or differences favoring women writers. Cheris Kramer found no sex differences in the use of adjectives or -ly adverbs in descriptive essays by males and females, while Diana Warshay found that women were more "fluent" writers than men (in the sense of being able to write about more topics in the time allotted) but were not "wordier" (in the sense of using more words per topic).[14] Furthermore, in contrast to Piggott's observations, Warshay found that men were more likely to refer to themselves in their writing--to be "ego involved"--while women were more likely to discuss other people (p. 6). Finally, a recent study by Sharon Pianko, her "Description of the Composing Processes of College Freshman Writers,"[15] found no statistically significant sex differences between the composing behaviors of 17 community college students, although she did find that the women had more positive attitudes about writing and had done more writing in school (p. 16).

My own dissertation, "Male and Female Modes of Rhetoric: A Content Analysis" (Diss. Ohio University, 1980), specifically addressed the issues raised by Farrell's essay about the existence of a female mode of rhetoric used on a wide scale by professional women writers. To test Farrell's impressions, I developed a random sampling technique to gather a set of expository or persuasive essays written by female and male writers for similar audiences in a selected group of magazines indexed in Reader's Guide between 1974 and 1975. After selecting 25 such pairs of essays, I had friends xerox them for me so that I would not know the sex of the writers. To analyze the 50 essays objectively, I developed a content analysis that coded the larger rhetorical features of the essays, such as the type of introduction and conclusion, the style and placement of the thesis statement, the use of topic sentences, the methods of paragraph development, and so on. I then trained a group of graduate students to test my accuracy as a coder and determined that my

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content analysis was reliable and replicable.

The results of the content analysis showed that what Farrell has called the female and male modes exist but neither is used very often in its pure form nor is either very female or very male. Three of the 50 writers used the female mode, three the male mode, and the rest used rhetorical modes too eclectic to classify. Interestingly, two of the three writers using the male mode (one female, one male) wrote for *Harper's*, suggesting that editorial guidelines are a factor determining how writers develop essays. Ironically, the longest essay in the female mode was a dissection of NFL coaches by Dan Jenkins, long-time sportswriter, in the 16 September 1974 issue of *Sports Illustrated*--"Ever See So Many Geniuses?" Jenkins begins with a confessional anecdote in which he admits he is not an authority on NFL coaches and then proceeds by indirection, innuendo, and frequent references to personal experience to show just how much he does know on the subject. The other essays in the female mode--one by Moira Walsh, film critic for *America* and the other by Abigail McCarthy, a commentator for *Commonweal*--were similarly written by well-known essayists for audiences familiar with the topic of their essays and their competence as professional writers.

In my initial analysis of results, I argued that what has been labeled the female mode was simply an alternative rhetoric that, far from being a strategy adopted by inexperienced and defensive writers addressing a hostile audience, is a technique best suited for professional writers who have a clear sense of who their audience is and what it knows about their topic--a friendly audience, in other words. But now, three years later, I believe the issue is more complex than that. The problem is that many of the people who have described how women write confuse the writers' *methods* with the writers' *intentions*, as if the two were always the same.

As Eleanor Kuykendall has pointed out in her helpful discussion of power relationships as a variable in language study, "Breaking the Double Binds," features ascribed to women's writing or speech--especially tentativeness and indirection--can be found in academic or diplomatic discourse as well.[16] The distinction is that the audience for academic or diplomatic discourse knows that response is expected of it and knows whether to take the writer or speaker seriously (pp. 88-89). The audience response is crucial, Kuykendall believes, because "Speakers [or writers] can afford to use nonserious structures in direct proportion to their audience's previous conception of them as serious" (p. 88). Therefore, professional writers like Jenkins, Walsh, or McCarthy, who have developed this relationship with their audience--which sees them as serious writers--can afford to use a rhetoric that appears to be nonserious by being indirect, allusive, and confessional. And in academic writing, the seemingly nonserious self-effacement with which so many academics find it necessary to begin an essay is very close to the admission of vulnerability of the confessional anecdote, yet it is actually only an ironic ritual signaling that the writer is to be taken seriously. But less secure writers, like Virginia Woolf in her experimental essays or Margaret Mead in *Male and Female*, addressing an audience that may not be receptive to their ideas, take real risks in using indirection or tentativeness as a method of developing their thesis, chiefly in the danger of their not being taken seriously by their readers, when that seriousness is what they want most of all.

Although it may be wrong-headed, then, the notion persists that there is a distinctively feminine mode of writing which is more likely to be a burden rather than an asset when women use it. Just why the myth lingers in the face of empirical evidence to the contrary is easy to speculate upon. First, the constructs described here are powerful because they correspond to stereotypes about how women and men behave, especially the stereotype that women are less assertive and more indirectly manipulative than men, and such stereotypes die hard. In addition, the studies I have cited are not widely known. Furthermore, some of the features that have been attributed to women's writing are there, but their presence can be explained, as mentioned earlier, by the writer's relationship with her audience. Until recently, women could not count on a receptive audience for their work, especially those that were dependent on the approval of male critics for their livelihood. The effect of this male audience, as Dale Spender argues in Man Made Language, the "male monoply on reality," is to inhibit women's writing: male control "constrains, coerces and censors."[17] Yet a similar kind of power relationship can exist for male writers facing an unresponsive audience or for student writers producing their first tentative efforts for their English instructors. This imbalance of power between the writer and the audience explains why the so-called female mode, when used by insecure or inexperienced writers, undercuts their authority.

Research on the effect of gender on writing--or rather, the lack thereof--thus offers composition teachers a more informed perspective on the direction writing instruction should take. Although most rhetorical treatises from Aristotle's on have emphasized the importance of the writer/audience relationship, teachers need to insure that their students understand the relationship is not a static one by having them write for varied audiences and helping them develop a repertoire of rhetorical strategies for doing so. Students should learn some paradigm for writing essays other than the traditional one described by Farrell as the male mode. In view of the recent research on the processes available to writers, we should recognize the limitation of teaching a rhetoric that treats writing as if its goal were to present a finished product. What Farrell incorrectly calls the female mode is valuable in this regard because it treats essay writing as a process of thinking to be shared with the reader, as a way of learning about a topic by writing about it. Finally, research and its contradiction of people's impressions about how women write show the danger of making assumptions about how people will write on the basis of their sex. Older women students will not necessarily be more discursive writers, any more than younger women will produce bland, polite essays, or male students will automatically be assertive and argumentative. As Fremlin, the mystery writer quoted in the introduction, concludes, it is true that men and women are not the same after all, but what Curry and others have mistakenly called femininity in writing is not the province of women alone, and there can be a charm in writing from it for men and women alike.

FOOTNOTES

[1] (New York: Workman, 1979), p. 13.

[2] Collected Essays (London: Hogarth Press, 1966), II, 285.

[3] "Can a Young Girl from a Small Mining Town Find Happiness Writing Criticism for The New York Review of Books?" College English, 34 (1972), 40.

[4] "Men, Women, and Sex," in Claremont Essays (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1964).

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THE "FORMULA" APPROACH TO BASIC WRITING: TEACHING TECHNICALLY-ORIENTED STUDENTS

by
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Background

Just as students exhibit "math anxiety," so too do they manifest "writing anxiety," especially students whose career paths lead to technically-oriented education and goals. Our challenge was to develop fruitful, innovative techniques for teaching our basic writing students whose anxiety and frustration over writing was aggravated, often, by their considerable skills in other subjects--engineering, calculus, physics, computer programming.

In Errors and Expectations (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), Professor Mina Shaughnessy documents the problems of basic writing classes for both teacher and student: "...the student lacks confidence in himself in academic situations and fears that writing will not only expose but magnify his inadequacies" (p. 85). But even in situations where the student is confident in other academic situations, the writing class often proves to be the stumbling ground. In spite of support from the institution itself and with "pep talks" by the teacher, the basic writing student at the Illinois Institute of Technology is often afraid to acknowledge that writing will be important to his or her career, and that the excuse, "I've always hated English and I'm not good at it" will not serve the career of a budding engineer, scientist, or businessperson. And as more and more students choose vocationally- or technically-oriented majors, even universities with more wide-ranging course offerings find that writing needs to be "relevant" to help students find the motivation that will overcome fears and prejudices about writing. Of course, the need is even greater in the basic writing class, where his or her mere presence in "remedial" reinforces a negative self-image and attitude where writing is concerned. The student, understandably, lacks confidence.

In an attempt to bolster that confidence, we designed a "formula" approach to teaching sentencing--in this case, the fragment sentence. An informal, conceptual, observational study allowed us to monitor students response to and improvement with the plan; we also interviewed the group of students after they had been taught the formula system to see if they found it helpful.

The System Itself: OSP + S + V = C; SPS + V = F; but OSP + SP+ S + V + V= C

Writing these formulas and others on the board at the beginning of a basic writing class on curing sentence fragments captures the imagination of the engineering or technical student in basic ("developmental") English. Decoding the formulas provides explanations which aid and comfort these students because the process enables them to use the mathematical "way" of thinking they're good at as a test for something they're not: the creation of complete sentences and the elimination of fragments.

Some of the symbols and terminology involved in these formulas may mystify the student for a little while, but they are not the same old dry-as-dust labels many developmental students find boring or have never understood in the first place. The fact that something having to do with writing can be put into a "scheme" piques the students' interest; we have found them to be more amenable to *trying* to learn about sentencing in the first place. Though these students may have learned that "A sentence contains a subject and a verb and expresses a complete thought," they are not sure what a complete thought is. To them, "They went to the ball game" is not a complete thought because the students don't know who *they* are. And yet sometimes the same sentence will be identified as a complete thought: the student doesn't *care* who *they* are! Our views of completeness and the students' do not match. Using the symbols in the formulas, however, may help clarify the completeness.

The instructor must help the students master and use the following symbols and their explanations as presented in Table I (below). The items in parentheses, of course, designate the more traditional grammatical terms, terms the instructor will probably wish to avoid for the above-mentioned reasons.

Table I

1. U = Utterance (any word or words beginning with a capital and ending with a period. A U may or may not be a C --complete sentence.)

2. C = Complete Sentence

3. F = Sentence Fragment

4. S = Subject

5. V = Finite Verb

6. T = There (or other words which appear instead of V --verb--when V appears before S)

7. I = Interrupter (that is, any word or words separating S from V. Interrupters include prepositional phrases and relative clauses.)

8. SP = Spoiler (that is, any word which spoils a respectable C and demotes this C to a U. We know the SP as either a subordinate conjunction or as a relative pronoun.) Spoiler is a key term in this method.

9. OSP = Absence of SP, an absence which either produces or maintains S + V = C.

10. SPS = Spoiler Subject (SPS are relative pronouns like who and which when they also function as subjects.)

In order for the formulas to work, students must first be able to recognize subjects, finite verbs, and demonstrative adjectives. It will be important for the student at some point to memorize the SP or Spoilers under two headings. Surprisingly, this has not been a problem for our students; often, they have begun by mastering column II (below), and using "process of elimination."

TABLE II

Spoiler I (subordinate conjunctions)	Spoiler II (relative pronouns)
although	who
though	whoever
since	whom
because	whomever
until	which
till	whichever
'til	that
after	
when	
whenever	
whereas	
where	
after	
as	
just as	
as if	
if	
before	
how	
so	
so that	
unless	
while	
why	

Students learn that any utterance which does not contain a Spoiler and which does contain OSP + S + V= C is a complex sentence. (It is, of course, necessary to point out that commands contain an understood subject.) Students learn that any utterance using the formula SP + SP + S + V is not a complete sentence. However, attaching this latter formula to the former, one must produce a complete sentence. In other words, adding a Spoiler to a perfectly self-respecting OSP + S + V spoils the requirements for a complete sentence, but either removing the SP or attaching SP + S + V to OSP + S + V will produce a complete sentence. In other words:

> Adding a Spoiler to a good OSP + S + V spoils the requirements for a complete sentence, but either removing the SP or attaching SP + S + V to OSP + S + V will produce a complete sentence.

All the while, the instructor must force the students to label the parts of their sentences with the symbols and ask themselves such questions as these: Is there an S in my utterance? Does my utterance contain a V? If I have more than one S + V, is at least one of them free of a SP? If I have just one S + V, is it free of SP?

Here are some illustrations involving problems with Spoilers, type I:

Utterance: Men swim.
Formula: OSP + S + V = C

Of course, men is a subject, swim is a verb, and there is no spoiler, so the utterance is a complete sentence. The formula allows for compound subjects and verbs, as well: Men swim and skate. (OSP + S + V + V); Men and dogs swim. (OSP + S + S + V).

Here is another possibility:

Utterance: Although men swim.
Formula: SP + S + V = Fragment

Although is a Spoiler, men is a subject, and swim is a verb, so the utterance is a fragment. To make this fragment a sentence may require the addition of OSP + S + V. Another illustration:

Utterance: Although men swim, they don't like to swim in cold weather.
Formula: SP + S + V + OSP + S + V = C

The new unit has no Spoiler, just a subject and the verb don't like. The spoiler may also be removed:

Utterance: ~~Although~~ men swim.
Formula: OSP + S + V = C

Students also learn that the SP + S + V unit can move about without destroying the complete sentence:

Utterance: Men don't like to swim in cold weather although they like to swim.
Formula: OSP + S + V ( ) +SP
+ S + V = C

Sometimes moving SP + S + V produces an interrupter, so that the formula looks like this:

Utterance: Men, because they like to swim in winter, invented heated pools.
Formula: OSP + S + (S° + S + V) ( ) + V = C

Notice that the combination SP + S + V is still intact; in fact, it always remains so. It is the OSP + S + V formula which splits.

Having introduced the interrupter, the instructor moves on to members of the Spoiler-Type II called SPS, leaving the remaining Spoiler II's for later. The SPS are, of course, the words like who and which which double as subjects and relatives.

Utterance: Men who like to swim in winter pay to swim in heated pools.
Formula: OSP + S (+ SPS + V)( ) + V = C

Note that SPS + V is a unit which always remains intact. SPS + V can also move about. Thus we see:

Utterance: Winter swimmers are often people who pay to swim in heated pools.
Formula: OSP + S + V( )SPS + V = C

As all Spoiler II's are not SPS, students must return to the formula SP + S + V= F.

Utterance: The heated pool which the swimmers paid for needs cleaning.
Formula: OSP + S (+ SP + S +V) + V = C

The formulas SP + S + V and SPS + V always remain intact. Any time the student finds these combinations, it's time to check the formula for a complete sentence and to make the necessary addition or cancellations.

Applying these formulas requires two further steps. First, the student might master the noun clause as S or subject:

Utterance: That the man can swim outdoors makes him happy.
Formula: SP + S + V = S SO, S + V = C

Second, the student needs to be aware that English syntax allows for several patterns, as in "There are five mice playing in the empty pool." Note there is no spoiler (OSP + T + V + S = C). When there is, the result will not be a complete sentence: "Until there are five mice playing in the empty pool" (SP + T + V + S = F). Adding OSP + S + V will, as with the more common syntactical pattern, S + V = C, produce a complete sentence:

Utterance: Until there are five mice playing in the pool, the cat won't catch them.
Formula: SP + T + V + S + OSP + S + V = C

As far as we know, no student has ever written a question using SP + V + S as in "although is the mouse in the pool?"

Though there may be other exceptions to the "formula approach," the needs of our developmental writers require techniques with which they can feel comfortable. The symbols and formulas which may seem overly complex to us are less fearful to our students. They are less afraid to look at the exceptions after they have had a less threatening approach to the sentence at the start. In addition, the formula approach, especially the formulas involving the interrupter and the T or expletive, may help the students start the "sentence combining" they need to develop a style with some pleasing sentence variety and rhythm.

Class Response

We used the formula approach with two basic writing classes at the Illinois Institute of Tehhnology during the Fall, 1982 semester. While the students were surprised and pleased that something "English" could, as some put it, "make sense," we stressed that formulas did not substitute for learning to incorporate the complete sentence into the writing process; we were careful to emphasize that writing is not merely a "plug-in," thoughtless activity, but that with careful prewriting, writing, and revision, a student could check to see if his or her sentences were, in fact, complete both in thought and structure. As we suspected, the formulas made the students more willing--made us less likely to have to plague our students with endless "frag" or "frags" written in the margins of graded papers. In addition, the formulas helped during conferences, keeping the student's interest while helping her/him work out in terms of "sense" and "form" whether or not the sentence was complete and suitable for his/her purposes in that particular paper.

Here are some student responses, as gathered in a questionnaire to which students responded anonymously. (The survey was conducted a week after the midterm; the formula approach had come early in the semester. I have corrected some spelling errors in the responses, but have left in other errors.)

> 'I thought the formula was a good idea. The whole idea of fragments seem less strange to me.'
>
> 'I always thought fragments were OK because I see them alot (sic) in advertising. But this make sense for learning how to do it right, because I could never really understand it the old way.'
>
> 'I don't know if I'll have trouble remembering all this later. It helps for now. At least I have an idea now what fragments mean.'

Twenty-two students were survyed, and of these, 17 (77%) found the instruction helpful in terms of easing their anxiety over learning anything about writing. Of those seventeen, an informal, modified holistic scoring procedure helped us find that 13 (approximately 80%) improved not only in quiz responses, but also where such improvement really counts: within the process of their weekly paper assignments, where fewer fragments had been found as compared with early in the semester.

Conclusions

While the results of this informal study certainly aren't meant to be definitive or conclusive, they certainly warrant additonal examination. As flexible teachers responsive to our students' needs, we may find that the formulas may be helpful in teaching one small area of the writing process to students for whom writing has in the past been a frustrating, incomprehensible experience. The formula system can be valuable if the instructor emphasizes that writing is a process--not merely a series of "wrong" or "right" fill-in techniques --but realizes that approaches which reflect the concerns and aspirations of her/his students will at least lead the student more gently into the things he or she has always feared. The rest of the writing process, of course, will require whatever innovation and patience the teacher can offer; as far as the formula approach is concerned, our more formal examination of this procedure in the near future may help us substantiate this method of motivating our often battle-scarred yet reticent basic writers.

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SENTENCE COMBINING EXERCISES

by
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In the past two decades, researchers have documented sentence-combining exercises as a sound, practical method for promoting students' mastery of written syntax. In fact, these exercises are one of the few methods that are supported by empirical research showing a specific, readily detectable, and, most probably, positive effect on students' writing. However, English/language arts teachers do not universally employ sentence combining exercises, quite possibly because they are not universally familiar with the approach, its theoretical bases, and the research supporting its efficacy. In this paper, I will review the general format of sentence-combining exercises, typical methods of employing them in the classroom, theoretical and psychological bases for believing that these exercises positively affect students' writing, research studies investigating the effects of sentence-combining exercises, and limitations of these exercises.

Sentence-combining exercises (SCE's) are, quite simply, exercises requiring students to combine two or more sentences into one sentence, using various transformations available in our grammar. One type of SCE is the signalled exercise, which requires the student to apply specific transformations to produce a "right" answer. An example taken from Frank O'Hare's Sentencecraft (1975) looks like this:

SOMETHING made me fear SOMETHING
The birds suddenly stopped singing.
(THE FACT THAT)
The storm was about to strike. (THAT)
→
The fact that the birds suddenly stopped singing made me fear that the storm was about to strike.

Notice that, while the exercise above requires students to apply specific transformations, it does not require them to know anything about those transformations. A series of early studies (Bateman and Zidonis, 1966; Mellon, 1969; O'Hare, 1973) shows that instruction in grammar and grammatical terminology is unrelated to whether SCE's improve students' writing. The goal of SCE's is for students to practice forming mature, syntactically complex sentences and to perform grammatical operations, not to learn to classify them.

A second type of SCE is the open exercise, which requires students to combine sentences any way they wish as long as the product is grammatical. More than one "right" answer is possible; and, in fact, the existence of acceptable alternatives becomes a subject of instruction. An example of an open SCE from William Strong's Sentence Combining: A Composing Book (1973):

1. The ashtray squats.
2. The ashtray is fat.
3. The ashtray is ugly.

4. The ashtray is in the middle of the table.

5. It is a monstrosity.
6. The monstrosity is porcelain.

7. The insides are blackened.
8. The blackening is with millions of ashes.

9. Into it have been heaped cigarettes.
10. Into it have been heaped crusts of food.
11. Into it have been heaped poems.
12. The poems are written on paper napkins.

13. It accepts all offerings.
14. The acceptance is with indifference.

The exercise above presents options. We might produce, "The fat, ugly ashtray squats in the middle of the table. It is a porcelain monstrosity." or "The fat, ugly, squatty ashtray in the middle of the table is a porcelain monstrosity." and so forth through the set of sentences. The options provide good material for teacher and class to examine stylistic choices, diction, and economy and clarity in writing. (Daiker, Kerek, and Morenberg, 1979, discuss the possibilities of "Ashtray" in detail.)

SCE's are usually used throughout a school term several times a week, for fifteen to thirty minutes per session. The sentence produced must be reviewed, discussed, and evaluated by the class. Discussion is particularly important for open exercises so students may explore the alternatives. Typically, students experience the sentences they produce by reading, writing, and repeating them orally. Strong (1976) especially recommends oral practice to teach students to remember longer discourse.

Most researchers recommend that SCE's be integrated into the regular English/language arts curriculum and report that students show high interest in them. Charles Cooper (1973) has devised a systematic outline to help teachers write their own exercises, and John Perron (1974, 1976) describes a number of sentence-combining games and activities he developed with fourth graders. Other variations include "decombining" passages from students' reading to create exercises and then comparing students' versions with the original, using students' own writing as material for applying SC where appropriate, and having students compose SCE's for each other (Ryan, 1980).

SCE's derive from Noam Chomsky's (1965) theory that the basis of grammar is the irreducible sentence (the "kernel") and that the structure of grammar is the syntactic operations (the "transformations") we perform on kernels to generate new sentences. Somehow, as very young children, we master an incredibly complex set of rules that enable us to both create and understand original utterances.

SCE's may or may not parallel the hidden language-generating processes of our brains, and they probably do not add to our basic linguistic skills. However, they appear to help convert passive syntactic abilities--those syntactic structures we comprehend but do not or cannot ourselves produce--into active abilities. James Ney (1974) proposes that SCE's improve students' abilities to hold structured discourse in their memories, to process and reprocess meaning into varied syntactic forms, and to consciously control their innate linguistic resources. SCE's do parallel the composing processes of manipulating languge, exploring alternate forms for meaning, and revising syntax.

Researchers have reported apparently positive effects on students' writing from SCE's. The measures most frequently used are average length of "terminable unit" (T-unit*) and average length of clause. The use of these two measures is based on Kellogg Hunt's (1964, 1970) finding that these measures increase steadily in writing with age and so reflect at least one major aspect of maturation in syntactic skills.

As we mature as writers, we employ more mechanisms to both elaborate and compress our ideas and so produce longer and more complex syntactic structures. A young child writes, /I went to town Saturday/ and I saw a parade/ it had horses in it and two bands/ the bands played loud songs/ [4 T-units; 23 words; average length of T-unit = 5.75 words]. An older child will write, /when I went to town Saturday, I saw a parade with horses and two bands playing loud songs/ [I T-unit; 18 words]. The older child has said essentially the same thing in fewer words and has used subordination to show relationships among ideas.

Increases in length of T-unit and/or words per clause for groups given SCE's have been reported for fourth graders (Hunt & O'Donnell, 1970), seventh graders (O'Hare, 1973; Combs, 1976), college students (Ross, 1971; Maimon & Nodine, 1978; Morenberg, Daiker, & Kerek, 1978; Stewart, 1978; Swan, 1978; 1979; Haswell, 1981); and for adults (Mulder, Braun, & Holliday, 1978). Other researchers have reported increases in measures such as length of composition and use of the structures practiced (Miller and Ney, 1968; Vitale, King, Shontz, & Huntley, 1971; Burruel, Gomez, & Ney, 1975), use of specific types of clauses (Perron, 1974; Mulder, Braun, & Holliday, 1978), or decreases in measures such as percentage of faulty clauses (Ross, 1971).

Evidence for the effects of SCE's on the quality of students' writing is weaker but suggests that effects are positive (i.e., papers written by students given SCE's are rated higher by teachers or other trained raters than papers written by control group students given some type of traditional instruction) and that the positive effects last for some time after instruction (O'Hare, 1973; Combs, 1976; Morenberg, Daiker, & Kerek, 1978). Other studies indicate that syntactic complexity in general is positively related to teachers' evaluations of quality in writing, along with other factors such as length and freedom from spelling errors, with some evidence that complexity is more important for argumentation than for narration (Stewart & Grobe, 1979; Veal, 1974; Crowhurst, 1980).

Obviously, syntactic complexity is not the only determiner of "maturity" or quality in writing; and, obviously, SCE's cannot serve as the sole method of teaching composition. Teachers who use SCE's must monitor students' writing to ensure that students apply SC techniques accurately and judiciously. Although overall results of research are positive, there are isolated reports of some students' overapplying their SC instruction, at least initially, and also creating errors in new syntactic structures they have not yet learned to control (Burruel, Gomez, & Ney, 1975; Maimon & Nodine, 1978; Swan, 1979). Students will need continued practice with difficult structures. Students will also need to see sentence combining, not as desirable for its own sake, but as one part of the total process of composing. The goal is for students to increase their conscious control of syntax, their ability to select from and command syntactic options according to their purposes in writing.

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*A T-unit is an independent clause and all its modifiers.

In sum, sentence-combining exercises offer English/language arts teachers a method for improving students' writing, one which is quite usable in the classroom and reasonably well supported in theory and research as effective. For further study, Morenberg and Kerek's bibliography (1979) is a good beginning point.

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TOWARD FREEDOM: RECENT WORK ON THE PARAGRAPH

by
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Since 1899, when a Scottish rhetorician named Alexander Bain included a discussion of the paragraph in his new writing textbook, certain characteristics have been almost universally associated with the paragraph. First, it has a theme, a main idea which all the sentences support and develop. Traditionally, the theme is stated explicitly in a topic sentence. Second, it has a logical relationship among its sentences, a relationship that can be subjected to analysis of one kind or another. Third, it has cohesion; that is, the sentences are written in such a way that each one seems to follow logically from the one before, and together they make sense.

This traditional model has been the starting point for much of the research into paragraphs in the past twenty years, as well as the basis for instruction in paragraph writing by many teachers and textbooks. It is well illustrated by a paragraph constructed from the kernel sentences on page 232 of The Writer's Options, a sentence-combining textbook by Donald Daiker, Andrew Kerek, and Max Morenberg (Harper & Row, 1982):

> In Nepal, it is Yeti, the Abominable Snowman, a feared yet revered creature who wanders in the snows of the Himalayas. To the Russians, it is the final descendant of the Neanderthal man and is known as Alma. The American Indians refer to it as Sasquatch, "the wild man of the woods." In the Pacific Northwest, where it roams the great forests, it is commonly called Bigfoot. Despite its variety of names, in every case it is an 8-to-10-foot-tall man-ape, a strange and hairy being that flees at the sight of humans. Whether the creature exists or not, the proliferation of stories about it surely points to the human need to believe in the strange, the mysterious, the unknown.

This paragraph has a clear theme, stated explicitly in the topic sentence at the end. This placement of the topic sentence is characteristic of a paragraph pattern referred to as "climactic" in The Writer's Options and as "suspended" in The Random House Handbook by Frederick Crews (1980). Cohesion is achieved by a common pattern in the first four sentences (a place, a name, and a description)--a method known as "collocation," and by eight "it"s which refer to "the creature" or to one of its synonyms, a device known as "reference cohesion, pronominal" (these and other cohesion devices are summarized by Stephen P. Witte and Lester Faigley in "Coherence, Cohesion, and Writing Quality," College Composition and Communication, 32: 189-206, May 1981). Its structure can be diagrammed according to levels of generality, using Francis Christensen's numbering system ("A Generative

Rhetoric of the Paragraph," CCC, 16:144-156, October 1965). The first four sentences are numbered 3, the fifth 2, and the last 1, with corresponding indentations. It can also be partitioned into tagmemes, the illustration (I) comprising the first four sentences, the restriction (R) the fifth, and the topic (T) the last, yielding the pattern IRT (A. L. Becker, "A Tagmemic Approach to Paragraph Analysis," CCC, 16:237-242, December 1965). Further, it fulfills the formula developed by Richard Warner, which states that a paragraph consists of a theme plus a developer, with or without a limitor ("Teaching the Paragraph as a Structural Unit," CCC, 30:152-155, May 1979).

Paragraphs of this kind, which are themed, logically structured, and cohesive, are highly readable; a number of studies have shown that they are understood more readily and remembered longer than prose passages which deviate in various ways from the traditional model. (See my bibliography, "Recent Work in Paragraph Analysis," in The Rhetoric Society Quarterly, Spring 1982, for an annotated list of readability studies.) Despite this advantage, however, the traditional model has been questioned, challenged, tested, criticized, or condemned by some of the recent scholarship. Paul Rodgers ("A Discourse-centered Rhetoric of the Paragraph," CCC, 17:2-11, February 1966) and Arthur Stern ("When Is a Paragraph?" CCC, 27:253-257, October 1976) argue that a paragraph is not an organic entity with a clear beginning, middle, and end, and that the number and locations of indentations within a piece of discourse are choices which the writer makes for a variety of reasons, including emphasis and eye appeal. When Richard Braddock checked a large sampling of published paragraphs to see whether they began with a topic sentence, he found that only 13% did, although 55% did have a topic sentence somewhere and many of the others had a unifying theme from which an "implied" topic sentence could be constructed ("The Frequency and Placement of Topic Sentences in Expository Prose," Research in the Teaching of English, 8:287-302, Winter 1974). Similarly, Richard Meade and Geiger Ellis found that fewer than half the paragraphs they studied employed any of the nine traditional methods of development (comparison, contrast, exemplification, definition, and the like) ("Paragraph Development in the Modern Age of Rhetoric," English Journal, 59:219-226, February 1970). While traditional teaching about the paragraph has probably helped beginning writers to organize and structure their ideas better than they might have if left to their own devices, it has also had a stultifying effect on some. In observing the writing processes of eight twelfth graders, Janet Emig found that two of them had learned the traditional model so well that they would write only in the five-paragraph-theme mode. Although their writing was themed, structured, and cohesive, its content was limited to subjects that the students could fit into the structure they had chosen (The Composing Processes of Twelfth Graders, NCTE Research Report 13, 1971).

In the light of these findings, we should be careful that what we tell students about the paragraph is presented in the form of options rather than of mandatory patterns and rigid rules. We should have students write under good rhetorical conditions whenever possible--that is, when they have something to say, a reason to say it, and an audience that needs to read it. We should encourage them to use writing to explore new ideas or to look at familiar material from a new angle. In addition, we should encourage them to experiment with written language by assigning modes other than the expository essay and by sharing with them our knowledge of nontraditional prose forms--the "Grammar B" described by Winston Weathers in An Alternate Style: Options in Composition (Boynton/Cook, 1980) and familiar to readers of Tristram Shandy, Ulysses, the nonfiction of Tom Wolfe, and many other published works. This letter from Ambrose Bierce (quoted by Weathers, page 48) illustrates some of the characteristics of Grammar B: fragments, salient repetition, non-verbal devices, and unconventional spatial arrangement.

> Editor "Lantern,"
> Will I tell you what I think of your magazine? Sure I will.
> It was thirty-six pages of reading matter.
> Seventeen are given to the biography of a musician,--German, dead.
> Four to the mother of a theologian,--German, peasant-wench, dead.
> (The mag. is published in America, today.)
> Five pages about Eugene Field's ancestors. All dead.
> 17 + 4 + 5 = 26.
> 36 - 26 = 10.
> Two pages about Ella Wheeler Wilcox.
> Three-fourths page about a bad poet and his indifference to--German.
> Two pages of his poetry.
> 2 + 3/4 + 2 = 4 3/4.
> 10 - 4 3/4 = 5 1/4. Not enough to criticise.
> What your magazine needs is an editor--presumably older, preferably American, and indubitably alive. At least awake. It is your inning.
>
> Sincerely yours,
> Ambrose Bierce

The traditional paragraph is useful, but let's be sure it doesn't strip academic writing of joy, life, and originality.

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STUDENT AS AUTHOR/EDITOR/RESEARCHER:
A MODEL TO OVERCOME WRITER'S BLOCK IN THE COMPOSER'S PROCESS

by
Carol Felser Laque

In order for students to begin to write, students must at once be cast into the roles of author and editor. As David Murray states, "writing is rewriting."[1] Therefore, in a process approach, the writer is aware that s/he is brainstorming, i.e., generating data and editing simultaneously. For the beginning writer this process may seem chaotic, overwhelming, and directionless. It is no less than the task which Psyche faces separating all the grains into orderly piles. Furthermore, the beginning writer may be trapped by data overload, a state in which the reader perceives too much data as a blank mind.

To introduce students to analyze the process they use to write is to cast the writer/editor into the role of researcher. Students tend to fall into two groups in the way they function as editor (generator and critic) in their heads and may generate an orderly edited outline form which s/he works. The second group generates data and focuses upon the raw data generally being unable to edit (eliminate or rearrange) much at all: This writer is apt to write nearly verb batim their prewriting as the essay itself. The chaos is, therefore, explicitly related. The first writer who works from an outline feels more secure than the second writer who needs to record every detail in the generation of data. The second group lacks editoral control and focusing and this group experiences a "blank" mind rather than tuning into the "chaos" of generation.

The blank mind or writer's block which plagues either groups creating writer's block may be helped if the beginning writer is introduced to still another role: that of researcher into the process. To expose students to the process of their writing and to suggest the role of researcher gives the student another tool to control and supervise his/her own process. The research into their method of composition helps the process oriented author see that brainstorming and "prewriting" are legitimate steps in the process of writing. Too often the author finds these stages as chaotic and unorganized, or the opposite may occur: the author may record everything as the essay itself without the ability perspective gives to organize, eliminate, and rework the writing. Three roles allows the student a new perspective.

The first two roles of author and editor put the writer at once into the fabric of writing. The third role, that of researcher, gives a distance and legitimizes time spent during which the writer distances him/her self into the position of examining the process of writing. In addition to legitimizing the process as a significant step to gaining editorial control and helping to overcome writing block, the student writers accept that there are many ways to compose or to edit. The blank mind of data overload exists because the author generating data and the editor who does not control, or limit, or arrange data are overwhelmed with the creative, generational aspect of composing. The role of researcher of the process offers the author distance to ask what stage of the task is he/she seeing.

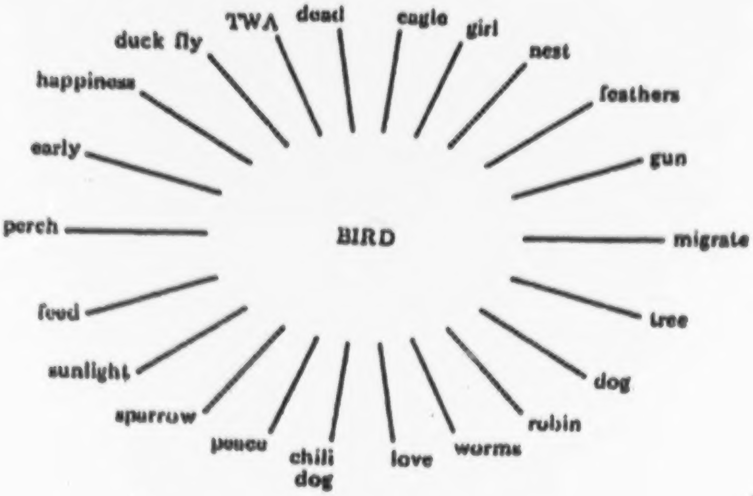
To expose students to this new role encourages each student to research the method of composing. Secondly, it is a way to distance the blank mind and examine it as a response to data overload. Thirdly, it is an excellent position from which to research brainstorming and prewriting as a legitimate and extremely valuable stage in terms of the "product" of writing. Finally, the researcher role enables the writer to see how ongoing and simultaneous the stages of writing are.

The first group of students who produce an outline seems to tune in to their writing at a later stage than the students who get caught and blocked by the generating data. This outline group tends to carry the dialectic of the author, editor and researcher as well as the prewriting stage in her/his head. In contrast, the group that generates the chaos of unordered data reproduces the interior drama which exists between the author, editor, and researcher on paper. Without understanding or legitimizing the role of writer as researcher and viewing the process from this perspective, the process seems chaotic and unreliable to the writer. Most significantly the writing produced is viewed as illegitimate and error ridden instead of being viewed as a part of the overall process of designing language.

The teacher of writing can employ at least one exercise to place the author/editor in a receptive role to discover and utilize his/her third role as the researcher of process. A visual analogy which can be used to introduce students to the process of prewriting and generating begins with a word the teacher writes down on the board. Students are given three seconds to write down three or more words that immediately come to mind. The use of word associations to represent the collective thought process is especially successful with students who are fearful, confused, used to failure, suffering from a blank mind, or who are unable to separate the processes of prewriting and composing a final draft. For these students who lack an explicit understanding of the stages in the composition process this exercise is helpful. This visual analogy, using a different word, can be employed throughout a course, and it accumulates more meaning. Avoid using words like sports since some words generate stereotyped responses.

After the students write their responses to the word bird on the blackboard, analogies to the writing process may be easily exploited. Bird is analogous, generally, to the "idea" of the paragraph; the associations represent possible proof and controls. A class is usually impressed with the overwhelming data generated in three seconds by one word. Furthermore, they are stuck with associations which seem unpopular and impossible to relate. At this point the teacher should stress that beginning writers generally face the blank mind because they are generating more rather than no data.

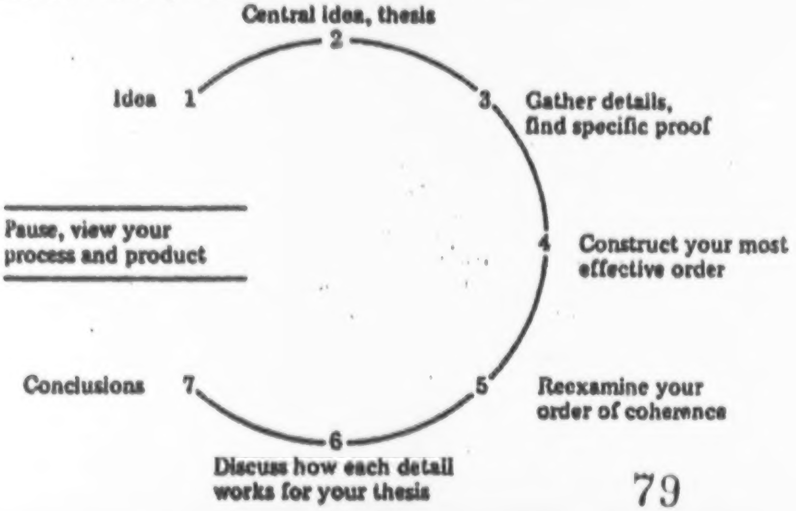
Bird = Idea
Associated words = Controls, details, proof
Connecting lines = Links, rationales, relationships


TWA
dead
eagle
girl
duck fly
nest
happiness
feathers
early
gun
perch
BIRD
migrate
feed
tree
sunlight
dog
sparrow
robin
peace
chili dog
love
worms

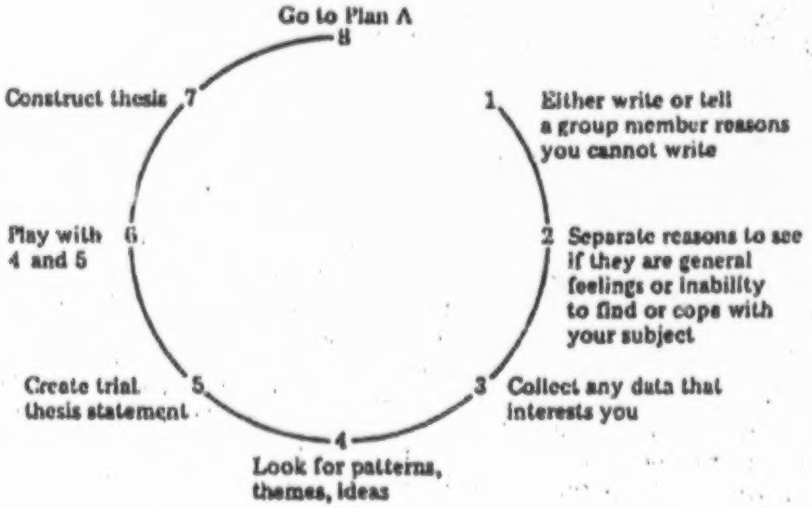
2

One way to illustrate to students that their minds are too full is to have them assume the role of researcher and talk in small groups with recorders taking notes or with individuals recording their own discoveries. In one group a writer who claimed to have a blank mind generated twenty ideas which his "editor" rejected as valid, but which his researcher recognized as useable data.

In this case the groups were told to research ideas and compose thesis statements from them. In fifteen minutes the class generated over one hundred workable thesis statements. When the writer sees processes in design form, it legitimizes whatever procedure the writer uses. To examine the process of writing from the role of researcher redefines what subjects are considered acceptable by the author/editor. The researcher helps the author/editor deal with and redefine limits. To design the process of writer as researcher of writing process completes the tripart role of the writer. As a researcher every detail has potential value.


Central idea, thesis
2
Idea 1
3 Gather details, find specific proof
Pause, view your process and product
4 Construct your most effective order
Conclusions 7
5 Reexamine your order of coherence
6
Discuss how each detail works for your thesis

Plan B: You Have No Idea What to Write


Go to Plan A
8
Construct thesis 7
1 Either write or tell a group member reasons you cannot write
Play with 4 and 5 6
2 Separate reasons to see if they are general feelings or inability to find or cope with your subject
Create trial thesis statement 5
3 Collect any data that interests you
4
Look for patterns, themes, ideas

3

The student who is evaluting the writer's process from the vantage point of researcher gain new confidence to experiment with learning designs. Furthermore, the writer exists in these roles simultaneously, but it is frequently the author as researcher who must frequently examine the process and deal with the mechanics in perception in order to facilitate the author and editor as they continue their dialogue during the writing process.

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THE EFFECTIVENESS OF A PROCESS LOG AS AN INSTRUCTIONAL AID IN WRITING CLASSES

by
Anna M. Skinner

The traditional method of teaching writing consists of providing students with models of good writing, analyzing good writing during class, and marking students' papers to indicate what is wrong with them, and sometimes, what is good about them. Countless teachers have been frustrated by the lack of success of this method of teaching--students who write well continued to do so; students who write poorly also continued to do so. We have increasingly realized that what most of our students need is "how to" instruction in writing, instruction which teaches them how to think through a writing problem and what techniques to use to produce various kinds of written texts.

To answer this need, in recent years a great many researchers have explored the composing processes of expert and novice writers, and thereby, have markedly increased our understanding of how people go about writing. Applying findings from this research to classroom situations is of prime importance if we want students to benefit from our increased understanding of composing processes. One application to classroom teaching has been the development of the Process Log--an account which students give about their writing processes. This instrument can direct students' attention to concerns of expert writers--e.g., suiting the written text to a particular audience--so that they can gain more control of their writing through understanding of their own composing strategies. In addition, a Process Log can provide teachers with information about their students' writing processes useful in guiding their future writing efforts. This paper will center on this latter use of the Process Log.

As part of the Writing Program Assessment Project at the University of Texas,[1] we developed a Process Log for students to fill out for each of their out-of-class writing assignments over a semester (Faigley, Skinner, Jolliffe, & Cherry, in press). The Process Log was used in several freshman and sophomore writing classes at the University of Texas. We formed the questions on our Process Log on the basis of recent research on the composing processes (e.g., Bridwell, 1980; Faigley & Witte, 1981; Flower & Hayes, 1977, 1980, 1981; Scardamalia & Bereiter, in press; Sommers, 1980).

The Process Log consists of a series of questions which students were asked to answer at various times while they were preparing an essay to hand in. When they had just received an assignment and chosen a topic, they were asked to record what they already knew, in general, about both the topic and the kind of writing they would be doing--e.g., a persuasive essay, an informative essay. They were also asked at this time to record how they planned to get the ideas for the paper--e.g., by simply beginning to write and letting the ideas develop, by making notes--and, finally, they were asked what reader or readers they were thinking of (if other than the teacher) and why they chose this audience.

Students were asked to fill out the second section of the Process Log after they had done a considerable amount of writing on their essay. They were asked whether their ideas about the topic had changed, and if so, how. They were asked if their assumptions about what the reader(s) knew or believed to be true about the topic had affected how they were writing the paper. In addition, they were asked whether they had made changes in their paper during or after writing a draft of it; what the three most important changes were, and why they made these changes.

In the final section of the Process Log, to be completed after they had finished writing, students were asked whether they had talked to anyone about the paper during the writing of it (all students using the Process Logs were encouraged to do so), and if they had, who they had talked to and what they had talked about. They were also asked at this time whether they had done anything when writing this paper different from what they had done in writing previous papers, and if so, what it was they had done differently.

In the classes where they were used, the Process Logs were handed out whenever an out-of-class writing assignment was made, and they were supposed to be completed and turned in with the essays. Students were encouraged in various ways to complete their answers honestly and in detail. The Process Logs were not "graded" in any of the classes in which they were used, so students were never penalized for their answers. In some cases, however, students were awarded with bonus points for taking unusual care in answering the questions on their Logs. The greatest encouragement to students to answer carefully was feedback from the teachers--generally teachers made comments on the Logs and returned them with the marked essays. Students became interested in filling out their Logs when they knew that their teachers would be reacting to the responses. Some teachers used the Logs as an adjunct to individual student-teacher conferences; in fact, the Logs often provided cues as to what should be discussed in conferences. For teachers who did not regularly hold individual student-teacher conferences, the Logs provided a means through which they could have a kind of dialog with each of their students about their writing processes. In fact, the Logs can be useful teaching aids in a variety of ways.

We found that the four most profitable uses were the following: (1) With the Process Logs, teachers can both reinforce good writing strategies and recognize areas of the composing process that a student is weak in, and thus, where any special work needs to be done. (2) Teachers can use the students' responses on the Logs to decide what comments to write on the essays themselves. (3) Students can also use the Logs to address their teacher about any special concern. (4) Finally, responses on Process Logs can provide a rich source for class discussions on composing.

The major value of the Process Log concerns its function as an indicator of changes over time in students' processes of composing. Teachers find students' responses on these measures provide excellent bases for reinforcing good writing strategies. Several examples will be useful to demonstrate this point.

One first-semester freshman on her fourth theme wrote in her Process Log that her classmates were her audience and that she chose them because "[the student] think I can persuade them that there is a lack of individualism in our society. . . . I'll see how well I did when we meet in groups [for peer tutoring]." To the question on her Process Log asking whether she did anything different from what she had done when writing papers in the past, and if so, what it was, she responded:

> Yes. In this essay and in the last one, I really worked more on my sentences. I tried to use short sentences which would express the required meaning. Moreover, I thought for the first time about my reader, his knowledge and beliefs.

The teacher's comments on the Process Log praised the student for her effort and success in writing for her peers--she had done a good job of addressing them, and the students in her group had responded positively.

Another freshman who wrote an excellent paper for his writing class said in his Process Log for that paper that he was just "going to start writing and let the ideas develop. No notes and no outline--I have to learn how to outline." In his teacher's comments on the Log, the teacher encouraged him to continue using the process of writing he was comfortable with and quit worrying about outlining his papers to plan them.

In a Technical Writing class where the Process Logs were used, one student's Log for her letter of application/resume assignment showed she had revised her paper to better adapt it to her reader. An early rough draft of her data sheet has listed as her 1974-76 experience (real work experience based on several years as a secretary):

> Administrative Secretary, American G.I. Forum--R.O.T.C. Program, Federally funded public relations and dissemination center.
> Duties: Established and maintained office for director. Picked up visiting dignitaries from airport and hosted receptions and open house information dissemination type gatherings. . . . Set up convention in Fort Worth taking care of hotel accommodations, meals, invitations, seating arrangements, entertainments . . .

On her Process Log, in response to whether she had made changes in her paper during or after writing a draft of it, she said that she had "cut out a lot and rephrased some." She said that one of the most important changes she had made was she "rewrote the '74-'76 experience section of the resume, cutting out a lot of menial tasks." She explained why she had made these changes:

> Although I actually had to do all these things it was beginning to sound like I was a super secretary or some madam (e.g., by picking up visiting dignitaries at the airport and checking out hotel accommodations, entertainment at conventions, etc.)

The final draft of her '74-'76 "Duties" was still very impressive, but no longer suggestive. Along with some humor, the teacher's comments on the Process Log focused on the student's thoughtful perception of her audience's reaction to the first draft and her consequent revision.

Another freshman wrote his first college paper on a topic which he was very familiar with--why teenagers join youth gangs in Boston. For the Process Log question, "Did you do anything different when writing this paper from what you have done when writing papers in the past?" he answered:

> In previous essays I have, at least most of the time, tried to influence my reader emotionally. This time I tried to make my essay unemotional and accurate. As a matter of fact, sometimes readers like to be left wondering and discussing some details of the essay."

In his comments on this student's Log, the teacher reminded him how interested in his paper his peer group had been when editing it, despite its "accuracy." Then the teacher discussed at some length the fact that a writer can vary approaches to a subject for varying purposes.

These examples show how the Process Log offers a source of information for teachers to draw on to reinforce students' developing composing strategies. This instrument can also help a teacher decide what areas of writing a student is generally weak in, for example, invention, and thus, tailor any individual help to these concerns.

Teachers can also use Process Logs to decide what comments to make on students' papers while marking them. One teacher who was using these instruments found that often she revised the comments she had written on a student's paper after reading the accompanying Process Log. Sometimes she toned down a criticism; often she added positive comments--praise for revising an area of the paper effectively, praise for appropriately tailoring an argument to the paper's audience.

Students can also address the teacher through the Process Logs, without having to speak in front of their classmates or make an appointment to see the teacher individually. A student in one Technical Writing class had, on one paper, jammed a great deal of information into a few very long paragraphs. His teacher had written, "Lord have mercy, James! Did you want to kill your poor reader?" and she explained on the essay what the problem was. The student's next paper had no such paragraphs, and the student wrote the following in his Process Log in response to the question, "In writing this paper, did you do anything different . . .?":

> Yes. You can see that this time "The Lord does have mercy!" I broke my essay into smaller paragraphs so you can catch your breath when reading it. Also I can take a look outside my window between paragraphs.

Responses on the Process Log can provide sources for class discussions of composing. Teachers can point to different composing experiences of members of the class as examples of how people go about writing. They can find especially useful examples for discussion in the students' comments about invention strategies, ways of shaping the content, and revisions. Not every student's Process Log, however, is helpful to a teacher. Some responses show a clear lack of interest (or lack of time). Nevertheless, when a teacher lets students know how important the instrument is, both to the students and to the teacher, when the teacher gives students feedback on their responses and uses the instruments exclusively as a source of encouragement rather than punishment, we found that students will generally make an effort to fill in their Logs conscientiously.

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Other Process Logs have been developed and used in writing classes--e.g., Peitzman, 1981--and some teachers at various high schools, colleges, and universities may be profitably using these instruments as a matter of course. In fact, any teacher might develop his or her own Process Log, or modify any existing Process Log to meet students' needs. What is important is that, short of individual conferences with each student about each out-of-class essay, these instruments provide perhaps the most efficient means of getting at information about students' writing processes and how these processes might be developing. Through their students' Process Logs, teachers are much better equipped to advise students, to guide them, in the complex task of writing.

FOOTNOTES

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USE OF REINFORCERS IN A SECONDARY SETTING

by
Virginia McCormick and Robert J. Suppa

Secondary teachers encounter increasing problems as fewer students leave schools and schools' responsibilities change daily. Skills deficits, attention problems, disinterest, and poor motivation interfere with the basic task of teaching content areas. In attempting to address these problems and teach their subjects, teachers sometimes forget the basic tenets of reinforcement theory.

Social reinforcement has long been recognized as a powerful tool in affecting behavior change (Hall, Lund, & Jackson, 1968). Yet in her investigation of natural rates of teacher verbal approval, White (1975) found that teacher approval rates drop as students progress through school. White stated that the overall rate of teacher approval over grade shows more relatively high rates in first and second grades.

> After second grade the rate declines sharply and continues to decline into high school, where it seems to stabilize at about one teacher approval every 5 or ten min. This means that in a typical class of 40 min [sic] the teacher emits four to eight approvals during the entire class period. (White, 1975, p. 369)

The reasons for this low rate may be hypothesized. Perhaps teachers are uncomfortable verbally praising students in secondary classes. Perhaps teachers believe that publicly singling out a student, regardless of the reason, is an embarrassment to the student.

The following reports a preliminary investigation which took into account these potential problems. The procedure used allows a secondary teacher to increase the rate of praise without verbally calling attention to the student. The report discusses the viability of teacher approval in a secondary setting.

Methods

An eleventh grade English teacher wanted to reward good work in a way that was meaningful to "sophisticated" sixteen and seventeen year olds. The teacher tried a number of social reinforcers throughout the year.

Before returning the first one hundred point test to students, the teacher tallied the test scores. While quite a number of students earned "A's" (on a scale of 92-100 = A), only three students received perfect papers. In order to encourage students to try harder to attain perfect papers, the teacher placed commercially produced stickers which said "FANTASTIC" on each of the perfect papers. Although there was little comment about the stickers during the class period, after the class was dismissed, one young man stayed and asked, "Don't papers with 99% get a sticker?" The teacher had been skeptical about using the stickers with high school juniors, and here was a student asking for them.

Before being totally convinced that students accepted the idea of reward stickers, the teacher tried them with a second 100 point test. The stickers were assigned in a hierarchical system which follows.

92	Good work	97	Super Star I
93	Great	98	Bravo
94	Terrific	99	Wow
95	Super Star 3	100	FANTASTIC
96	Super Star 2		

Although few students responded verbally to the stickers on their papers when papers were returned, one student remained after class. He indicated that a problem existed and asked the teacher to recalculate his score. The teacher had inadvertently written 93% instead of 97% on his paper. The teacher made the appropriate corrections, yet the student lingered. When asked if another problem existed, the young man asked, "Don't 97's get different stickers than 93's?" Obviously, the sticker system was working.

Throughout the year, the teacher noticed various groups of students entertaining contests among themselves. Since the stickers were given in a hierarchical fashion, students competed with their friends as to who had more "Super Star's," "Bravo's," or "FANTASTIC's." The coveted "FANTASTIC's" soon sent the teacher to the sticker store for a new supply of stickers.

Around Christmastime, students' test scores waned slightly. The excitement and activity of the holidays as well as students' added responsibilities with parttime jobs may have accounted for the slight decline in scores. Regardless of the reason for the decline, the teacher decided to revitalize the project by displaying test papers with stickers on the bulletin board. The bulletin board, titled "Word Wizardry," displayed a wizard pointed at the chosen vocabulary tests. Suddenly, "A" papers increased to sixty or more each week.

Since tests were usually given on Fridays, the teacher displayed papers on Mondays. As soon as students realized how this worked, the first place they went upon entering the room was to the bulletin board to see if their papers had "made it."

Again, by May, students seemed tired of school, and after working industriously on research papers, they began to backslide. To reverse the decline in grades, the teacher placed gold foil stickers which said "TERRRIFIC" on perfect papers. Soon students were arriving earlier and earlier each Monday morning to see if their papers were among those selected to receive a place of honor on the bulletin board and/or a sticker. By the Tuesday after the Memorial Day holiday, students were arriving in the classroom as early as 7:30 a.m., although school did not officially begin until 8:25!

From time to time throughout the year, the teacher employed other reward systems. For example, when the college prep students wrote introductory paragraphs for their research papers, students' exceptional paragraphs, decorated with blue ribbons, were displayed on a bulletin board. When other students saw the quality of the displayed paragraphs, the general quality of research papers improved, and students became quite concerned about having everything documented accurately, written carefully, and edited meticulously. As a result, the research papers were a joy to read.

In a lower ability class, one of business, general, and vo-tech students, the teacher found that while students responded to the sticker system, they responded better to the coupon system. To motivate students during a review lesson prior to a test, the teacher rewarded correct answers with one point coupons redeemable at the end of the marking period. Competition for the coupons became fierce and, from time to time, students reminded the teacher that they had not used the coupon system for a while. Although students vied for these valuable coupons, only four students in the entire class attempted to redeem them. Apparently, receiving the coupons was more important to students than redeeming them.

Near the end of the school year, the teacher awarded "Super Kid Rainbow Ribbons" to this class's written assignments and displayed the papers on a bulletin board. Like the response to the blue ribbons used with the college prep classes, these rainbow ribbons generated a great deal of enthusiasm among students. While students were pleased with the ribbons, they were even more pleased about having their papers displayed.

Finally, upon the completion of an outstanding project or assignment, the teacher mailed home congratulatory notes printed by the school's print shop. The forms were printed in school colors and the school mascot announced the message. Notes were mailed to parents so that when parents opened the day's mail both they and the student received the good news.

To evaluate the students' attitudes about the use of rewards, the awarding of stickers in particular, the teacher asked students to complete a questionnaire at the end of the year. See Appendix A for questions from the survey relating to stickers.

Results and Discussion

The survey summary showed that 44% of the students felt encouraged to try harder because of the stickers and awards. No students reported the stickers and awards as detrimental to their efforts. In response to a preference question about stickers and grades, 25% of the students said they looked for stickers first. When given an open ended question, students responded candidly. Some of their responses follow.

> --"In the beginning, I felt like a little kid, but now I look forward to receiving a sticker."
>
> --"You know you did well."

--"The sticker system is great, it encourages us to try harder."

--"I'm proud of my sticker!"

--"It's very encouraging."

-- Keep the stickers!"

--"Good system!"

--"I have a sense of accomplishment."

--"The sticker was a pat on the back when the teacher didn't have time to."

--"It made me feel good."

--"The sticker became my goal."

--"The sticker felt like an award."

--"It was a little something extra."

--"It livened my day."

Although student comments clearly indicate the good points of the reward method of recognition, some methods had more drawbacks than others. Certainly, the cost of the stickers, rainbow ribbons, supplies for making the blue ribbons, and so forth could become prohibitive. On the other hand, while the cost of the congratulatory notes was nothing since they could be printed in the school's print shop and mailed in school envelopes, the time spent in writing the notes, locating students' addresses, and addressing the envelopes was great. Even with these drawbacks, the teacher plans to reinstitute some of the procedures the following school term because of the greater number of positive aspects. A more formalized evaluation will also be conducted.

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Appendix A

Have the stickers/awards encouraged you to try harder on tests? Circle your answer.

Yes No

Which do you look for first when a test paper is returned? Circle your answer.

Sticker Grade

Explain your answer.

Please write a short paragraph explaining how you feel about the sticker system. How did you feel about it at first? Later? Now? Should I continue it next year? Why? Why not?

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RESEARCH-BASED ENGLISH TEACHER SKILLS FOR CLASSROOM INTERACTION

by
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The personality and teaching style of the teacher, whether contrived or spontaneous, appear to influence the environment to which the student is responding and adjusting, and what transpires in the classroom between the teacher and students is apparently influenced to a great extent by the teacher. Alexander and Elson (1971) studied the effects of teacher-initiated personal interactions on the achievements of students, and findings from this study emphasized the importance of affective teacher variables for student learning at higher levels. Harris (1973) found that students taught by a teacher who modeled flexible, divergent, or creative behavior increased in creative behavior more than students with teachers who did not provide such modeling. Experimental studies of questioning by Ward and Tikunoff (1975) and by the Stanford Program on Teaching Effectiveness (1976) found that students who were in classes where more recall questions were asked did slightly better on recall tests, yet students did equally well on integrative questions regardless of what percent of recall questions were asked in class. In a similar vein, Wright and Nuthall found significant positive results in student responses when teachers exhibited a probing behavior (1970); yet Brophy and Evertson did not find a relationship between seeking improved responses and achievement (1976). Other studies have involved areas such as direct and indirect instruction (for example, Flanders, 1970; Samph, 1974); teacher praise (for example, Soar, 1973; Brophy and Evertson, 1974; Stallings and Kaskowitz, 1975); and teacher enthusiasm (for example, Mastin, 1963: Brophy and Evertson, 1976).

In order to investigate the effects of teacher characteristics on pupil achievement, observation of actual instances of instruction in the classroom becomes paramount. Techniques for measuring classroom behaviors began to be available when Medley and Mitzel (1958) published the Observation Schedule and Record (OScAR) and when Flanders (1960) published the initial findings of his Interaction Analysis Categories system (FIAC). Rosenshine (1976) reports that the work of such individuals as Flanders, Medley, and Mitzel ushered in the modern era of studies on teacher effectiveness. Even in this "modern era" only a limited number of studies which investigate the relationship between classroom instruction and student achievement has been conducted and the number of researchers involved is equally small.

A study by Peters and Blues (1978) which focused its attention on the effect of one teacher characteristic, preference for complexity and tolerance to ambiguity as measured by the Co Scale of the Omnibus Personality Inventory, on student achievement in response to literature suggested that high Co OPI teachers contribute more positively than low Co OPI teachers to student written ability to interpret literature. One of the recommendations of this study was the need for further research into the characteristics attributed to high Co scorers and low Co scorers through observation and evaluation in the classroom in order to define teacher behaviors which could be associated with effective and noneffective teachers. If learning outcomes of students relate to high complexity teachers, then it seemed probable that a trait such as tolerance to ambiguity and preference for complexity as measured by the Co Scale of the OPI would relate to verbal reactions which the teacher creates in the classroom. A second study by Peters and Amburgey (1982), therefore, focused its attention on determining if there were differences between verbal reactions in classroom environments created by teachers who score high on the Co Scale of the Omnibus Personality Inventory and teachers who score low on the Co Scale of the Omnibus Personality Inventory. The measure of perception called Complexity--Co, is related to an open, creative approach to phenomena and is a measure of intellectual disposition or orientation (OPI, 1962). Co has its highest correlations with the measures of Creative Personality (.58) and Intellectual Quality (.52) on the Opinion, Attitude and Interest Survey (OAIS). It correlates -.33 with the measure of a need for Order in the Edwards Personal Preference Schedule and .47 with a need for Autonomy. In terms of the Activities Index, Co correlates .46 with a need for change and a -.49 with a need for order. The estimate of reliability for the OPI was based on three different samples. Estimates of the internal consistency of the OPI measures and the test-retest values range from .67 to .89. The observation instrument used to code verbal reactions was Gordon Mork's Verbal Reaction Behavior Log. The VRBL has three major categories: Cognitive, Skill, and Affective.

The Peters and Amburgey study provided evidence that high complexity teachers move their students into higher levels of cognition which allows for challenges to student thinking. It appears that high complexity teachers have an intellectual disposition which mentally challenges student thought and demands more support for contention, greater divergence in analysis, more contrast, more inference, deeper response. The high complexity teacher appears to be capable of establishing greater interaction in the classroom. It is through interaction that the student becomes more expressive, more conscious of how he is expressing himself, and aware of how his classmates' views either coincide or conflict with his own. Without interaction, he is unable to determine if the teacher, for instance, has explained a certain statement to everyone's satisfaction except his own; he is conscious of the weight of his words and those of his peers; he is more alert to the classroom environment, as he is more a part of it.

The teacher who is himself tolerant of ambiguities and has a preference for complexities apparently does create a different atmosphere in terms of verbal interaction, in terms of the amount of pupil-teacher interaction, in terms of dealing in the highest levels of cognitive and

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skill development, in terms of allowing more student responses, in terms of personal involvement and positive reinforcement as well as in terms of dealing in those areas which require innovative and unusual approaches, specifically in terms of moving studentsto higher levels of cognition.

Although one criticism of education is that teachers do not challenge students to move to higher levels of thinking, the results of the interactions in the high complexity teachers' classrooms suggest that teachers possessing those traits characteristic of high Co scorers did allow students high level cognitive verbal interactions. The processes exemplified by high complexity teachers were those which Hilda Taba believed should be encouraged. In her book Curriculum Development: Theory and Practice, she wrote:

> If...formulations are presented to the student ready-made, his own perceptions have nothing to do with what is included or omitted from the reservoir of the past. There is no way for him to give meaning to these formulations. He is unaware of the thought forms in terms of which that knowledge is organized. His mind cannot make them his own, use them to form other ideas, and integrate them into a system of generalizations he already has. It is the experience of inquiring, reflecting, relating, and generalizing that is important, not whether ideas and facts that are used for the material come from the past or from the current experience.... Teaching for creative and productive thinking must help the student in the reasonable restructuring and reorientation which enables him to see problems, events, and ideas in a new perspective (pp. 116-117).

Teacher characteristics and accompanying teacher behaviors emanating from the research reported in this article are presented in the following profile of the behaviors which appear to be exhibited by high complexity teachers.

High Complexity Teacher Profile

Cognitive organization:	the teacher reflects a grasp of the subject matter
	the teacher reflects a valid, systematic structure of the subject matter
	the teacher reflects an understanding of the concepts of the subject matter
	the teacher reflects freedom from the textbook
	the teacher reflects an understanding of perception and perception-modificiation

the teacher reflects a sound method for teaching concept attainment

the teacher makes possible situations for student development of insight into concepts of the subject matter

Creativity:

the teacher minimizes threats to learning

the teacher maximizes attractions to learning and personal growth

the teacher approaches the scheme of work in new and unusual ways

the teacher's plans opens fields for students through introduction of additional sources of information or of other facets for exploration

the teacher's plans involve the students

the teacher uses problem-solving situations and creates activities which cause students to consider alternative ways of thinking

the teacher allows students to exhibit many forms of expressions or output of ideas

the teacher makes it possible to be supportive of students

Acceptance:

the teacher's plans reflect faith in the students' ability to learn

the teacher's plans make it possible to treat students as persons without an attempt to control them

the teacher's plans make it possible to listen with understanding and to communicate this understanding of students' feelings, experiences, and thoughts

Openness:

the teacher seeks information from his students

the teacher's plans make it possible to receive and respond to information from students on the intrinsic merits of the information

the teacher's plans make it possible to perceive students' points of view and to express that perception.

The basic premise which underlies the research reported in this article is the belief that there are certain teacher characteristics and behaviors which make some English teachers more competent than other English teachers. It would appear that behaviors which characterize high complexity teachers are behaviors which, if emulated, might be helpful in improving student achievement in the classrooms of all English teachers.

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CAN IT BE TOO QUIET TO LEARN?

by
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We've all noticed students who are easily distracted from their studies. Everytime the classroom door opens, they look up. Whenever someone shuffles his shoes or drops a pencil, a loud "SSHHHHHHH!" is hissed. That some people need quiet when concentrating is not surprising. But would you believe that certain youngsters CANNOT concentrate in quiet?!

All the sixth grade students in a New York school district were tested to see whether strong preferences existed for either Quiet or Sound when "thinking." Ultimately, 32 boys and 32 girls revealed such preferences and were randomly and equally assigned either to an environment that matched or mismatched their indicated acoustic desires. Thus, half the children who preferred Quiet were tested in a Quiet environment and half of those who preferred Sound were tested in a Quiet environment. In addition, half of those who preferred Sound and half of those who preferred Quiet were tested in a Sound-filled environment.

Students tested in an environment that matched their learning style preference for either Sound or Quiet, achieved mean reading comprehension and attitude scores that were significantly higher at the .01 level than those of their peers who were tested in the mismatched environment. In addition, a significant interaction at the .05 level was evidenced between learning style preference and sex. Both males and females tested in environments that matched their preferences scored higher than the boys and girls in the mismatched environment.

Thus, when we warn students to "Be Quiet!" because others are taking a test, we inadvertently may be imposing the wrong acoustic environment on a child who Needs Sound when concentrating. On the other hand, how will we ever know unless we test for such preferences beforehand?

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GAPPING IN READING: A DIAGNOSTIC AND RESEARCH TOOL

by
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A major problem English teachers have involves finding a good diagnostic instrument to help them understand the reading behavior of their students. For too long now school administrators and reading personnel have insisted on the use of standardized reading tests for diagnosis of reading behavior. Despite the lack of construct validity of these tests, school personnel continue to rely upon them as diagnostic tools and as measures of reading achievement. Construct validity, a concept which requires that a test be based on a theory by which the test-performer's response demonstrates that the test measures what it says it is measuring (Cronbach, 1970, 123), is not ever used by standardized reading test-makers.

The failure of test-makers to design a theoretically sound test raises many questions for the researcher in reading as well as for those educators who use the current tests. By implication, many researchers today have raised questions not only about the usability of tests, but also about the non-theory of the model of reading teaching used in our schools.

In simple terms the non-theory approach resembles what Pearson and Kamil (1978) call the bottom-up approach to reading. This method of presenting reading involves teaching from sounds and letters to meaning. The authors contrast this approach to the psycholinguistic model which starts with meaning and ultimately incorporates the visual aspect of written language, but only as the visual aspect augments the reader's acquisition of meaning.

The present writers' concerns center around the development of a diagnostic and research tool that will reflect the important components of a reading theory that are derived from the impact of psycholinguistics on the reading process. This tool, which utilizes a gapping procedure, clearly reflects our perceptions of reading from a psycholinguistic point of view. Among the concepts that the gapping procedure taps are notions which regard reading as a process by which the reader acquires meaning. The idea of meaning here transcends the issue of the writer's deep structure. We are interested in the meaning the author arrives at which is his/her metaphor for his/her life experiences, knowledge, and background. In order to arrive at this level of meaning we perceive reading as an interactive process between reader and writer. In this interaction the reader goes beneath the symbols of print and extracts his/her meaning behind the eye. The eye serves merely as a processing agent which carries the symbol and its meaning to the brain where perception and understanding occur. In order for this interaction to be successful the reader must have a conscious intention, with clear attention and unselfconscious concentration on the symbol which carries the author's meaning. Since reading is a process which involves the search for meaning, the reader uses his/her own knowledge, understanding of language and visual processing tools to guide him/her to an understanding of the author's message. By implication, the reader uses strategies that ignore the early instructional edict to read from left to right. The reader's task--once it is perceived clearly as a search for meaning--is facilitated by the selective visual processing which may take the eyes from right to left, up to down, or down to up as well as left to right. A corollary of this search for meaning implies that for the reader to get meaning, s/he must bring meaning to print.

Each of these issues is clearly dealt with in the utilization of the gapping procedure. In this instance, then, a test or a tool is presented that responds to a theoretical formulation which follows from psycholinguistic theory.

Troen has developed a technique called gapping which may be used to test the extent to which reading is indeed a process in which the reader brings meaning to print, contributing "...at least three parts non-visual information...to one part visual information..." (Smith, 1978, 204). The technique involves the deletion of words, phrases, and even entire sentences from a text which may vary in length from one paragraph to a complete article. Confronted with such a gapped text, the reader must utilize knowledge of the world as well as of the features that signal organization and cohesion in written discourse to formulate and test hypotheses about the text. Unlike in a cloze task (see Oller, 1979, 340-379) the reader does not attempt to fill in the deleted items. Rather s/he interacts with the gapped text and, using the limited visual material that remains, draws inferences about the kind of information that has been deleted and about the relationship of the remaining fragments to each other. These hypotheses, which may ultimately be tested with reference to the complete text, may be traced to the clues the reader has utilized in the process and to their interpretation based on knowledge of the subject matter, syntax, rhetorical conventions, and the like.

Three kinds of gapped texts may be used. The first, in which everything but the first words of each sentence of a paragraph is deleted, gives insight into the way the reader may use knowledge of conventions of paragraph development in reading. Consider, for example, the following gapped paragraph:

The swing of the pendulum...
Over the years, the pendulum...
Each new movement...
Each swing...

The reader would probably form at least a general hypothesis about the topic of the paragraph and about the possible range of information deleted (note that we are not concerned with the words *per se*). An abbreviated account of the reasoning process might include the following: 1) The topic of the paragraph seems to be the swing of a pendulum. 2) The pendulum in question may be figurative rather than an actual pendulum given the historical perspective implied by "over the years" and the reference to "new movement." 3) If the paragraph is about an actual pendulum, it probably describes something of the motion of the pendulum and may also give an historical perspective. 4) If the pendulum is figurative, the topic is probably movement between two extremes in a given field, since a pendulum is typically described as moving between two extremes.

The hypothesis may be further refined if the paragraph is placed in the context of the article from which it was taken-- "Humanistic Teaching of the Basics" published in *The Educational Forum* (Weinstein and Schwartz, 1981). The effect of context may be judged in the second kind of exercise in which only the first words of each paragraph of an article are retained. In order to 'read' such a text one must utilize all available clues which define the structure of the article, indicate what paragraphs might belong together as part of a larger conceptual unit, what topics seem to be developed and how. For example, in the following gapped version of "Humanistic Teaching of the Basics" each number represents the start of a new paragraph and article subheadings are included:

1. The last decade was
2. This article has a twofold purpose:

HUMANISM AND THE BASICS

3. As a result of the decline in the quality of schooling,
4. After a decade of elation and
5. The swing of the pendulum
6. Today we again witness
7. In this educational tug of war,
8. In order to eliminate confusion, we define subject matter as
9. In our modern, complex society subject matter

BUBER'S THEORY

10. Contemporary educators, seeking an advocate, often
11. While Buber introduced the idea of
12. Further, Buber left no doubt that while freedom is
13. In discussing Buber's educational philosophy, Maurice
14. Nowhere in his writings did Buber suggest that
15. Buber recognized that a school cannot function
16. In addition to limiting freedom and imposing discipline
17. In two separate writings,
18. In the former publication, Buber,
19. In the latter
20. Buber's references to curricular specifics should in no way
21. It is clear that such a model
22. Must a humanistic approach to education
23. We argue that humanism, like traditionalism, is

The paragraph about the pendulum may now be seen as part of several larger units. For one thing, it is the fifth paragraph of the article. It is the third paragraph under HUMANISM AND THE BASICS, and some readers may already suspect that the pendulum may swing between these two usually opposed philosophies of education. In addition, the paragraph belongs to the set of paragraphs 3-7 within the larger group, which seem to deal with an educational tug of war (¶7) that has been going on for at least a decade (¶4) and continues to the present (¶6) and has to do with the quality of schooling (¶3-4). The set is defined by such devices as the opposition between "decline" in ¶3 and "elation" in ¶4, the definite article at the start of ¶5 which implies continuity, the use of "again" in ¶6, and the summarizing effect of the deictic "this" in ¶7. This hypothesis is confirmed by the shift of topic to the problem of definition in ¶8, a topic which may be further developed in ¶9 given the repetition of "subject matter." This kind of analysis may be extended in developing hypotheses about the structure of the entire article.

In the last type of gapped text up to 75 per cent of the words may be deleted but spacing and punctuation and key function and content words are retained[1]. In this instance as well the reader uses a full range of nonvisual information to interpret the visual information on the page and to explore possible and probable ways in which key words, punctuation and gaps may be related. Paragraph 5 now looks like this[2]:

The swing of the pendulum
not new . Over the years,
swung from in
1930s, to conservative in 1950s, to humanistic
1960s and " basics" 1970s.
Each new movement,
,
. Each swing
counterswing to another reactionary .

Being able to 'read' this paragraph implies, for example, relating it to the theme of teaching implied in the title of the article, inferring that the discussion is about educational movements, reasoning that if the swing from the 1930s to the '50s was from X to conservative, then X is at the opposite extreme from conservative, and observing that in this paragraph, at least, the humanism of the 60s and the "basics" of the '70s are represented as being equal but opposite educational positions. This is an observation the reader may wish to revise in light of the greater coverage given to a discussion of Buber's Theory in part two of the article.

The fact that so many hypotheses about paragraph 5 and the article as a whole may be constructed on the basis of so few words illustrates the importance of the nonvisual component of reading. The gapping technique may provide a suitable means for obtaining evidence that reading is an interactive process. It may enable teachers and researchers alike to gain insight into the reading behavior of individuals who bring various kinds of knowledge to print as they negotiate the process of obtaining meaning.

FOOTNOTES

[1] The idea of this kind of gapped text was briefly introduced by Malcolm Coulthard of the University of Birmingham, England, in September, 1979, at a seminar he conducted at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, Israel, under the auspices of the British Council.

[2] The following is the complete text of paragraph 5 (Weinstein and Schlachter Schwartz, 1981):

> The swing of the pendulum from one extreme to the other is not new in the American classroom. Over the years, the pendulum has swung from traditional essentialism to progressivism in the 1930s, to conservative counterattacks in the 1950s, to humanistic education in the 1960s and "back to basics" in the late 1970s. Each new movement, riding on the waves of civic and political action and reaction, was ready to banish all vestiges of its predecessor. Each swing of the educational pendulum has never failed to bring about a counterswing to another reactionary pedagogy.

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CAN I KNOW HOW YOU FEEL IF I HAVEN'T WALKED IN YOUR SHOES?

by
PATRICIA P. KELLY

It had happened again! Students, shuffling through the door, muttering, "Weird story last night," "Stupid," and "Why did we have to read that story?" I felt defeated because I thought that the pre-reading discussion we had had the day before would set the students up for reading and discussing the story. I knew that "helping readers relate literature to life is one responsibility of the teacher, but such interaction is possible only if the elements of a book actually touch elements in the reader's experience" (Loban, et al.,1969:442). However, in attempting to relate a literary selection to the lives of adolescents, a teacher confronts several problems--the universality of the literary experience, the maturity of the students, and the disparate experiences of the readers. For my students a story about ghetto life was as foreign as an African safari. My task then was to devise a way that actively involved students in situations they would encounter in their reading and to determine the effects on classroom discussion of literature.

Procedures

A friend agreed to let me use three of his eleventh grade classes for the study and to teach them exactly as planned. The groups did not differ significantly in intelligence, language ability, or socio-economic level. I developed two simulation board games, one about seeking identity through gangs and one on abject poverty in the ghetto. At another school site the games were assessed for ease of playing and for understanding of the concepts embedded in the simulations. I selected three short stories, "The Language of Men" by Norman Mailer, "Afternoon in the Jungle" by Albert Maltz, and "On the Sidewalk Bleeding" by Evan Hunter. Each story could be read in approximately ten minutes; each had different themes so there would be no carry over of concepts from one story to the other; each had settings unrelated to the students' every day environment; and in each the central character was male.

The research was conducted on three days, each one week apart. Baseline data was gathered on the control and experimental groups by having both classes read "The Language of Men" and engage in a discussion. The teacher was instructed to open all discussions during the research periods with the question, "What is your reaction to the story?" During discussions he was allowed only to ask for further explanation or to rephrase portions of students' responses. No direct or leading questions were asked.

On the second day the control group read and discussed "Afternoon in the Jungle." The experimental group played the poverty simulation board game, designed to include concepts from the story, then read and discussed the story. The same procedure was followed on the third day for both classes, using instead "On the Sidewalk Bleeding" and the identify simulation game. However, to account for the possibility that just doing anything different before reading might affect a discussion, a third class, designated as a Hawthorne effect group, played the poverty game, which was conceptually unrelated to "On the Sidewalk Bleeding," the story they read and discussed.

I taped all class discussions and identified those students who participated. The typescripts were coded, using Squire's (1964) seven categories of student response: literary judgment, interpretational, narrational, associational, self-involvement, prescriptive, and miscellaneous. In addition, responses were coded as indicating positive, negative, or neutral attitudes toward reading the stories. I had established an intercoder reliability of .92 with two other English teachers, using typescripts of prior discussions.

The Results

Self-involvement was the only category of oral student response which reflected some unusual change. The percent of responses in this category did not vary greatly between the experimental and control groups in the baseline data, but there was a marked difference in the second day's discussion. The experimental group had 13 percent of the total responses falling into this category, while the control group had 20 percent. However, the analysis of typescripts revealed that over one half of the thirty-two responses coded as self-involvement in the control group were negative, showing some degree of rejection or lack of empathy with the character. The following are examples of student comments made in the control group on Day 2 while discussing "Afternoon in the Jungle":

> "I've dropped money all over the place . . . . I don't try to retrieve it . . . . It isn't worth it."
>
> "Haven't you dropped a quarter under the machine, and do you feel like moving this big machine? It's not worth it really."
>
> "I don't feel sorry for him in particular."
>
> "I couldn't because I'm not used to it, but if I had been brought up in poverty all my life and that's all I had ever seen, I would almost have to accept it."

They continued discussing at some length about how they got money from their parents and about what they would do if they found $100,000.

By contrast, in the experimental group there were no responses coded as self-involvement which indicated rejection of a character. The following are examples of student comments:

> "If I find a penny, I always pick it up . . . . If it's heads, it's better. I just pick it up and take it home. I have a collection of pennies."
>
> "He would be more grateful than I would if I found a penny."
>
> "Like I understand that game sort of tried to show us how hard it was even to get a dollar. Like we kept losing and all, and this little boy finds just 50 cents . . . ."

By definition, responses in which the student associates himself with the feelings or actions of a character either through identification or rejection are coded as self-involvement. It was interesting to note that those students who had not played The Poverty Game expressed over half of their self-involvement responses as rejection and that no responses reflecting rejection were made by any student who had played the game. Loban (1953) pointed out that less sensitive readers condemn the actions of characters without trying to understand the motivation for such behavior. If we assume, that the groups were fairly homogeneous in the number of sensitive and less sensitive readers, it might be proposed that The Poverty Game in some way sensitized the less sensitive readers in the experimental group.

Further analysis revealed that the interpretational category of response predominated in all discussions. At no time did this category contain less than one half of all responses. The grade level of the groups being studied undoubtedly had an effect on the response patterns. The eleventh grade students in this study were apparently discussing literary works at Carlsen's (1970) intermediate levels, where students are interested in the psychological problems of characters, the social conditions and their impact on characters, and the moral issues in the story. These responses to literature would fall primarily into Squire's interpretational category. Therefore, the principal response of the three groups was not an unusual finding, nor was it unusual that the percentage of oral narrational responses was extremely low, responses normally associated with younger readers (Carlsen, 1970).

The small percentage of student responses coded as literary judgment (approximately 2 percent of the total) was not comparable to other studies. Squire's ninth and tenth grade students responded in literary judgment terms more than these groups of eleventh graders. Carlsen has contended, however, that discussion of the techniques of literature should be reserved for college study. The philosophy of the teacher in this study toward the treatment of literature at the secondary level was not determined. It might be conjectured that interpretational responses had been subtly reinforced and that literary judgments had not been emphasized in these particular classroom settings.

The percentage of student participation in the experimental group when simulation games were used prior to reading increased by more than 50 percent. On the first day when games were not used, the experimental group had 38 percent of the students making some oral contribution to the discussion; this percentage was the lowest recorded at any time in the study. When simulation games were used, that group had an average of 58 percent student participation. In the control class, even when the discussion time was extended, student participation did not increase appreciably. Simulation games played prior to reading stories involved more students in class discussion in less time than when games were not played.

The teacher's role in conducting the discussions on the three days provided some interesting data. A student reply was considered to be the entire reaction given by a student before either another student or the teacher interjected. Such a reply could be one word or several sentences. A teacher question was the commenting needed to keep the discussion going, such as "Why?" The student-teacher talk ratio was 3 to 1 in the experimental group when games were played, contrasted by 2 to 1 when games were not played. Moreover, when the length of the comments was considered, the ratio was 9 student words to 1 teacher word. When simulation games were played, students talked nine times more than the teacher.

The only positive or negative attitudes toward reading the stories surfaced on Day 3. In the control group the discussion of "On the Sidewalk Bleeding" began:

T. What is your reaction to the story?
S. I didn't like it.
T. Why?
S. I thought it was boring.
T. Why?
S. There wasn't too much to it.

Later in the discussion the student (a boy) revealed his reasons for not liking the story. He felt that the murder of a teenage gang member was unrealistic; such things never happened. Other students attempted to convince him of the authenticity of such an occurrence, but he remained adamant in his dislike of the story and the way the situation was portrayed.

On that same day with the same story in the experimental group, about three minutes into the discussion period the following exchange took place:

T. Are there any other reactions to the incident?
S. (a boy) I liked it.
T. Why?
S. I don't know. It's kind of hard to explain. I feel like I've been stabbed, too.
T. You feel like you've been stabbed. Why?
S. When you get into a story. When you put yourself in Andy's situation . . . .

These exchanges, one negative in the control group and one positive in the experimental group, were the only overt responses which students made concerning their disliking or liking the fact they had read the stories.

The results from the Hawthorne effect group, which had played a simulation game conceptually unrelated to the selected story, proved interesting. The total number of student responses were fewer than even those in the control group; students responded slowly; time elapsed when no one responded; more teacher interjections were needed to keep the discussion going (3 to 2 student-teacher talk ratio). It was my impression that the students appeared confused. This seemed to be confirmed by student remarks after the class discussion had ended. One student commented to the teacher that the game was fun but that he could see no relationship to the story. Others agreed. One student, however, offered an obscure connection between the game and the story. But at no point in the class discussion did a student question the relevancy of the simulation game.

Significance of the Study for Classroom Practices

While it is true that more small-group work may now be used in English classrooms, for many English teachers the classroom discussion is a preferred teaching technique when studying literature. Consequently, efforts should be made to make classroom discussions more efficient and effective.

Teachers who are interested in decreasing the amount they talk in the classroom and increasing student participation might find the use of simulation games or a similarly designed pre-reading activity effective. Whether the games were more motivational than conceptual, the fact remains that students were able to respond as well and more often than those students not using games.

The results also showed that a pre-reading activity that does not directly relate can be detrimental to a discussion. In other words, doing nothing before reading a story is preferrable to doing something that will only confuse.

I believe that simulation games might best be used when stories touch situations unfamiliar to the students being taught. The time involved in devising the games precludes their frequent use. However, as an introduction to a thematic unit, such simulations can provide the experiences needed to produce more understanding of a character's behavior and certainly more empathy.

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A PLACE FOR DRAMA IN AN ERA OF "BASICS"?

A RESEARCH-BASED RATIONALE

by
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From every side English teachers at all levels hear cries for a return to the "basics." The kindergarten teacher, who knows her children need experiences in oral language, feels compelled to use the reading readiness workbook. The college English department finds it increasingly difficult to staff small sections of esoteric electives when waiting lists for remedial writing courses are long. The question of what is really basic to the discipline of English is not an easy one; endless debate has not yielded consensus.

In this debate, advocates of informal drama raise their voices. But, the more supportive post-Dartmouth era past, such advocates are in danger of being ignored. Why should English teachers consider drama a basic in their curriculum?

To clarify, it is necessary to describe the kind of drama we are considering. Informal classroom drama, creative dramatics, and improvised drama, are among those terms used to describe a classroom-based experience in which the teacher leads students to draw on their own ideas in developing a scene or scenes. Such experiences are for the participants' benefit, not for formal presentation to a passive audience. Students use body and voice, imagination and knowledge of literary structure, to create characters, setting, conflict and resolution, and in the process enhance their language skills.

How many students experience a planned sequence of drama sessions designed to move from simple to complex, from movement and pantomime through story dramatization to more involved improvisation and scene creation?

There is apparently no empirical data available to answer such a question, despite the fact that interest in drama began in the early 1920's.[1] Winifred Ward, a drama specialist at Northwestern University, began experimenting then with informal drama techniques for all students, as contrasted with more formal theatre techniques for a talented few. Her work grew from the fundamentals of drama and progressive education; a major aim was personality development.

Despite this long-standing interest, there is some survey research indicating that while many teachers are interested, few report doing drama sessions with children regularly.[2] In a recent survey of 346 classroom teachers, 75% reported that they favored creative drama in the classroom, though less than 25% actually taught drama on a regular basis.

A subject which has had articulate spokespeople describing its merit, and which has been advocated for fifty years should certainly by now have carved for itself a secure place in elementary curricula. This does not seem to be the case despite teacher interest in providing drama experiences for students. What are the reasons so few teachers launch continuous, sequential programs in drama?

Techniques vs. Outcomes

Perhaps one reason is the type of writing which has been done about drama. The writing is enthusiastic but diffuse, encouraging but disconnected. The major attention has been given to describing specific techniques which have worked in a particular classroom situation. A technique which "works" is typically viewed as one which both students and teachers enjoyed. Attempts to provide a theoretical framework into which these varied techniques can be fitted are minimal. Empirical research to determine if children are in some ways different (or changed) as a result of these experiences is also minimal. Burton, after reviewing the field, found virtually no substantive research.[3]

Here, then, may be one reason creative dramatics has not made significant inroads into the English curriculum: rationales and research evidence documenting gains are largely missing. It is particularly easy to see why, especially in our era, advocates of a school subject who cannot provide these two justifications are apt to find it difficult to establish a place in an already crowded curriculum. Ours is a day when accountability looms large on the horizon.[4] It's a particularly formidable giant when those interested in drama have so little ammunition with which to defend it.

English teachers may well be interested in drama and attracted to the widely available informal descriptions of drama activities. How many are able to justify including such activities on a regular, continuing basis to skeptical administrators, supervisors and parents? On what basis can we justify improvised drama as part of the English/language arts curriculum?

To answer this question, a comprehensive survey of the literature about creative drama was made. To begin, the large body of informal descriptive literature, advocating particular techniques or lauding drama in general, was eliminated. This body of literature serves a definite purpose for the teacher interested in learning how to do drama with children. It is not, however, helpful in justifying to skeptics the reasons why it is important to include drama in the curriculum.

Following an informal search of writing about drama, results were checked against a study which also surveyed writing about drama.[5] Less than 5% of the 1,110 items in this annotated bibliography report structured research studies. Results of some of these will be described later. Thus, a thorough review of the literature about drama showed that few materials were available to help answer the question, "How are students different after drama experiences?"

The two types of writing which could help answer such a question include:

1. materials providing a rationale for drama, a theoretical or philosophical examination of its nature, or descriptions of the structure of the discipline.

2. reports of research which help explain the benefits which accrue as a result of drama experiences.

These will be organized and commented upon here in an attempt to summarize what we really know about drama.

Foundational Writing

Theoretical writing, including attempts to develop a rationale and efforts to describe the structure of the discipline, is limited. A well developed rationale advocating drama because of the cognitive growth it encourages has been presented.[6] McGregor predicts that four cognitive areas may be developed: synpractic language, differentiation, categorization, constructive alternativism. The author describes these and gives examples but no emperical data are included. The article represents an interesting construct, but no research has been done to see if such learnings really occur.

One author[7] developed a rationale for including dramatics in the elementary curriculum because of the types of language growth which may occur. General categories and subskills of language are identified, which are all applicable at the secondary level. A description is included of the types of growth which may occur in vocabulary, paralinguistic elements of pitch, stress and juncture, use of kinesics, and ability in spontaneous oral composition. In this, as in the previous article, no data are reported to indicate that these posited types of language growth actually occur.

In addition to these attempts to establish a rationale for drama, some authors have dealt with the problem of identifying the specific behavioral objectives which may help achieve the larger goals drama authorities have identified. The most ambitious undertaking is the work of Shaw,[8] who presented a meticulously conceived taxonomy which goes far beyond the scattered descriptions of techniques and activities available until then. The work clearly is a milestone in writing about creative drama. Another, more modest attempt by Koziol,[9] analyzes the kinds of cognitive demands made upon students in drama classes. This writer's attention is devoted to the high school level, but his analysis of intellectual processes required of students during drama sessions is equally applicable at the elementary level.

There is some research which attempts to look at how student behavior in classes exemplifies the beliefs of drama specialists as described in such foundational writing. Research by Lazier, and Ayllon and Snyder, is summarized more fully in a helpful monograph on drama.[10]

Drama Outcomes

From its early beginnings in school curricula, informal drama was advocated because of its positive psychological effects on self-concept, role-taking ability, and creativity. Research which begins to document the positive effects of improvised drama has been summarized in succinct form.[11] Despite the importance of such psychological outcomes, they are less useful to English teachers in this era of emphasis on basics, than is research which looks specifically at language growth.

Language Research

Several studies investigated the effect creative dramatics has on speech problems. Ludwig[12] worked with kindergarten children. After creative drama sessions, those in the experimental group showed 52% improvement on articulation errors. Woolf and Myers[13] worked with ninety, first and second grade children, who had auditory discrimination and misarticulation problems. The creative dramatics group showed significant improvement over the control group after eighteen weeks of sessions. McIntyre,[14] also interested in speech problems, worked with adolescent and pre-adolescent speech handicapped students. She led a six week program in creative dramatics which achieved significant reduction of consonant articulation errors.

In addition to studies of students with language problems, some attention has been given to normal language growth. It is logical to include dramatics as part of the English/language arts program, because of the nature of creative drama. Students use oral language and non-verbal language during drama sessions. The research reports give support to drama as a language art, because they show the types of language growth which occur as a result of drama.

An early study by Blank[15] gave initial indication that significant changes could be effected in language abilities. He studied three aspects of students' development: voice qualities (including articulation and tone flexibility), personality factors, and vocabulary. Using two groups of children, one which met weekly during the school year for creative drama and one which did not, Blank administered pre- and post-tests in the three areas of concern. The research report indicated that in vocabulary and in the voice qualities he measured, Blank found the experimental group showed a mean improvement over the control group significant at the .01 level.

Several researchers assessed the kind of language growth which occurs in the early years. Lewis,[16] doing some needed correlational research, found kindergarten children who played well in unstructured sociodramatic play also had superior abilities in syntactic maturity, fluency, and organization in language situations. This was not a study of the effects of creative dramatics. However, if such a relationship does exist between unstructured dramatic play and language, perhaps providing structured dramatic experiences might help improve language ability at all grade levels.

A study to determine the effects of a sequence of creative dramatic experiences suggests important growth in language. The Southwest Regional Laboratory focused its efforts both on the creation of materials and on testing those materials with students. Though the materials are of considerable merit, primarily because of the long-needed sequential arrangement they offer, they will not be discussed further. Of more direct concern to this investigation is the research resulting from the project.

Neidermeier[17] used an experimental group consisting of seven kindergarten and seven, first grade classes. These subjects were matched with thirteen classes in a control group. After twenty weeks of sessions in pantomime, and extemporaneous speech, improvisation, and play production, subjects were tested. Results showed the experimental kindergarten group did significantly better in all areas except extemporaneous speech. The first grade subjects did significantly better than control groups on improvisation and all play production tasks. They were also significantly better than control students on some aspects of mime, and extemporaneous speech.

Using techniques related to drama, Schmidt[18] investigated growth of oral and written syntactic complexity. She found prompted role-taking and scripted role-taking to be superior methods in effecting greater syntactic complexity in kindergarten through sixth grade students. Though drama programs are not limited to role-taking, the study suggests that this technique can be justified as part of an English program because of the syntactic growth it encourages.

Saltz and Johnson[19] used a technique they call thematic-fantasy play, similar to what creative drama experts call story dramatization. Working with eighty preschool children from low economic backgrounds, they provided directed experience in this technique for four months. After TFP training, students in the experimental group engaged in dramatic free play significantly more often than did control subjects. Experimental students were significantly better at remembering stories, at seeing causal relations between pictures showing different parts of stories, and at making inferences to connect events in two pictures. When total verbal output was examined, students in the experimental group were significantly superior to students in the control group.

Researchers have also been interested in the kinds of language growth which occurs in older students. One researcher[20] reports, albeit in regretably brief form, that fourth graders who had fifteen weeks of dramatics more than doubled the rate of verbal growth of the control group. Stewig and Young (1978)[21] investigated the effects of twenty drama sessions on the language growth of middle-class fourth-graders, using pretests and post-tests. Students increased output of total words, T-units, clauses, and number of different types of words. In a replication (Stewig and McKee, 1981),[22] oral language again showed significant increases.

Lunz[23] investigated seventh grade students' ability to retell a fable for a specified listener. Students were pre-tested, given ten drama sessions in two weeks, and post-tested. The researcher examined students' ability to retell a story, to play a verbal game, and to respond to a written role-taking task. Students in the experimental group did significantly better on the fable retelling task than did students in the control group. No significant differences were found on the other two tasks, undoubtedly due to the limited treatment time. The study was also limited by the small number and homogeniety of the students.

Growth in vocabulary, syntax, and accent was assessed by Hendrickson,[24] who gathered language samples on tape in an interview and game playing situation. Pre-tests were given, thirty hours of creative dramatics spread over ten weeks were provided, and then the Mexican-American subjects were post-tested. Control students studied their cultural heritage for the same amount of time. Eight raters who evaluated the tapes noted improvement in the three language measures for each student in the experimental group.

Teachers should find it possible to justify inclusion of informal dramatics as part of the English program. Research studies provide evidence that students grow in several language abilities when they participate in drama. Growth occurs in:

1. vocabulary (documented by Blank and Hendrickson),
2. paralinguistic elements of pitch, stress and juncture (Blank),
3. syntactic maturity (Hendrickson, Schmidt, and Lewis),
4. fluency--total number of words used (Lewis, Neidermeyer, Saltz and Johnson , Stewig and Young, Stewig and Makee),
5. ability to retell a story (Lunz), and
6. such non-verbal aspects of language as pantomime (Neidermeyer).

One way, thus, to justify classroom drama as part of the English program is the research evidence about the variety of language growth which can occur.

Creative Drama and Reading

English teachers are also interested in students' ability to read, since this ability clearly affects the ability to respond to literature, among other language abilities. Though there have been many studies of reading instruction, few have focused on the effect improvised drama can have on children's reading abilities. Carlton and Moore[25] worked with four classes of children in grades one through four, with subjects matched on reading achievement. Students in the control groups received reading instruction in basal readers, while in the experimental groups an individualized approach incorporating creative drama was used. At the end of the three month treatment period, students in the experimental group attained significantly higher reading scores than students in the control groups.

What makes the Carlton and Moore study particularly noteworthy is that the researchers were working with children described as disadvantaged. Davis[26] also worked with disadvantaged children. In a less thoroughly reported study, she describes results for a group of fourth and fifth grade students who were in a reading program incorporating creative drama. On the standardized achievement test used to measure growth, children in this group did significantly better than children in a control group.

More recently, Henderson and Shanker (1978)[27] investigated reading comprehension of black, low-socio-economic second-graders representing three different reading levels. Two of the three groups received basal reading instruction with workbooks, while one group received basal reading instruction with drama. Then groups were reversed. Teacher-made comprehension tests following each lesson showed gains significantly higher when students participated in the drama experiences.

Results about the influence of creative drama on reading instruction not as conclusive as those related to language. Though Carlton and Moore, and Davis found positive results, Ziegler[28] was unable to report significant differences in reading achievement in students who had creative drama experiences.

Conclusion

There is little doubt that many English teachers at all levels are interested in drama; intrigued by descriptions, they are anxious to try their hand. How many do indeed manage to offer regular, recurring drama experiences in a planned sequence to their students is unclear.

One reason is that teachers feel they must justify the inclusion of blocks of time for drama to principals, curriculum directors and others who determine the nature of the curriculum. The help teachers get in doing this from professional writers and researchers in the field is limited. Clear, incisive rationales, sequentially developed behavioral objectives, and empirical research are only now beginning to be available. More needs to be done so the classroom teacher can indeed use research to justify including informal classroom drama in the English/language arts classroom.

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THE DIVIDED SELF IN THE CLASSICS AND POPULAR LITERATURE: A TOPIC FOR COMPOSITION CLASSES*

by
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> There have been "three essential stages in the development of the ideas on the double...[:] an identical self (shadow, reflection), promising personal survival in the *future*; ... the individual's life [and] his personal *past*; ultimately, ...an opposing self, ...in the form of evil...." (Otto Rank, "The Double as Immortal Self," in *Beyond Psychology* [1941; rpt. New York: Dover Publications, 1958], pp. 82-83).

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> "Y-you are the *High Council*? Incredible! You could almost be...*us*!"
> "We *are* you....at least an alternate you....[We have] an *existence* parallel to your own.... Now...our scientists developed a *machine* capable of merging our divided natures into a *unified self*" (*Eerie* [a science fiction comic magazine], August, 1967).

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Those diverse statements from psychoanalyst Otto Rank and *Eerie* are only two examples of the range of divided-self (or double) material that English teachers can use to plan a composition-literature course or unit containing multi-leveled appeals for high school and college students. As these two examples illustrate, the divided-self theme belongs not only to scholarly studies in psychology and literary classics but also to popular media. The terms "schizophrenia," "ambivalence," "dichotomy," "divided self," "double," or variants of them appear in specialized articles and books on psychology; in literary studies; in popular films, novels, plays, and television programs; and in comic books. In dealing with the divided self, a topic representing a felicitous meshing of scholarly and popular concerns, teachers can fruitfully use scholarship to illuminate the material taught in high school and college general composition and literature courses.

In this essay I shall describe a divided-self literature-composition course or unit that could be adapted for both high school and college students. Included in the discussion will be representative titles of works to be studied, organization of the course, methods of introducing it, class procedures, and writing (or related) assignments.

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*Based on my presentation at the Conference on College Composition and Communication, San Francisco, March, 1982.

Representative works to be used in this course or unit can be chosen from British, American, Continental, and Russian literature. British classics include Mary Shelley's Frankenstein, Stevenson's Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, Wilde's The Picture of Dorian Gray, Conrad's The Secret Sharer, and David Storey's novels and plays. From earlier American literature one could choose, of course, Poe's "William Wilson;" and, from recent works, Thomas Tryon's The Other and Larry Niven's All the Myriad Ways. To give students experience in studying works outside British and American literature, one could select Dostoyevsky's The Double, Hesse's Demian or Steppenwolf, and Kafka's The Metamorphosis.

To prepare to teach these works, teachers might do reading in psychology and in critical literary studies of the divided-self theme. While much of this background reading would not be used directly in the course, it would provide perspective. From psychology they might select Otto Rank's essay, "The Double as Immortal Self" (referred to above) and R.D. Laing's The Divided Self (1965). Influential literary studies with which they should be familar are Ralph Tymm's Doubles in Literary Psychology (1949), Masao Miyoshi's The Divided Self: A Perspective on the Literature of the Victorians (1969), Robert Rogers' A Psychoanalytic Study of the Double in Literature (1970), C.F. Keppler's The Literature of the Second Self (1972), and John Vernon's The Garden and the Map: Schizophrenia in Twentieth-Century Literature and Culture (1973). In addition, two highly readable essays are Albert J. Guerard's "Concepts of the Double" (an introduction to Stories of the Double) (1967) and Claire Rosenfield's "The Shadow Within: The Conscious and Unconscious Use of the Double" (Daedalus, Spring 1963).

That background reading will not only provide perspective for teachers but also help them decide how to organize the material. (The organizational pattern will be determined also, of course, by curriculum requirements in specific schools, for example, by whether equal attention is given to literature and composition and whether the writing assignments are arranged according to rhetorical strategies such as comparison-contrast and classification.) Three of the many possible course organizational patterns are (1) chronological order (in classics and popular works), (2) most obvious to least obvious examples (in classics and popular works), and (3) popular versions followed by classics. Obviously, one can set up other configurations; for example, if classics are used as the chief reading assignments, popular literature might be used as attention getters at the beginning of the course and then in oral reports and in class discussion as the course proceeds.

In introducing this material, teachers will be influenced by the course organizational pattern they have selected. Three methods I have used (separately or simultaneously) are (1) stimulating students' immediate involvement by finding materials and by writing about this subject; (2) referring to a minimum of theoretical studies (depending on the level of the class); and (3) providing a list of topics students should look for as they begin to read. The first type of introduction, stimulating class participation, can be accomplished by asking students to mention divided-self works they are already familiar with. (They will probably mention Frankenstein, Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, Sibyl, The Three Faces of Eve, and Carrie.) Both students and teacher can agree to be alert for (and mention in class) divided-self references that they notice in newspapers, plays, books, films, and television programs. (In my classes, this agreement has resulted in "found" items such as a photo and an article on Patty Hearst [in Newsweek and in Kansas City Star]; letters to Jim Jones [Time]; and a Newsweek cover on dual roles of women.) A third way to get class involvement is to have students write an impromptu personal experience essay early in the course--perhaps during the second class period. I sometimes ask, "What experience have you had with a divided self (double)?" or "What divided selves have you observed in other people or in books, plays, films, and television programs?" Students have responded by mentioning their being one of a part of twins, being a Gemini, being born into a bi-religious, bi-racial, or bi-national family. Some students write about a universal interest in the divided self (either because we all have it or, paradoxically, because it seems highly unusual). Some students perceive the divided self as a negative feature--a take-over by the uncontrolled part of oneself. Others affirm the desirability of a divided self (for example, its salutary effect on an artists's work) or describe the infinite possibilities in people's willingness to admit potentialities for any act—good or evil.

Occasionally, a teacher might decide to begin a course with theoretical studies adapted to a particular class or, at least, to include these as a component in the introduction. One might use Miyoshi's distinction between two sources of a second or partial self: self duplication ("the second self or double appears, as it were, from outside the first self") and self division (the second self "splits off from within") (New York: New York Univ. Press, 1969, Preface, pp. xi-xii). Another easily adaptable topic consists of Keppler's list of terms for the second self: Twin Brother, Pursuer, Tempter, Vision of Horror, Saviour, Beloved (Tucson: Univ. of Arizona Press, 1972). If students are already familiar with Freud or Jung, one might briefly refer to their terminology for self division, such as the id, ego, and superego, and shadow, persona, and anima. Again, knowledge of students' backgrounds and interests will enable teachers to present theoretical material appropriately.

A third type of introduction is to give students a list of representative divided-self topics. (These can be made as general or as specific as one wishes. Teachers may simply provide the topics or link them with the specific works to be studied in the course.) One can first remind students that the term "divided self" has many applications (splits in temperament, religious loyalties, political loyalties, sexual identity). Secondly, students can expect to find many contradictions: strangeness and familiarity, wishes for immortality and death, the victim's simultaneous craving for and fear of the encounter with the second self, oneness and separateness of the two selves, goodness and badness (The second self seems a menacing figure but is invited), and the effect of the second self upon the first one (disintegration [even death] but also growth) (a list suggested by Keppler). Thirdly, the split may be good (as, for example, in Laing's theories), freeing the true self--the real, denied one. Or it may be an oversimplification since most people contain not only two but multiple selves.

Just as the introduction must be adapted to the level of the students, so should class procedures. Group discussion can occur immediately (as the students are reading the works) or can take place after they have finished them. Students can also give oral reports on the works being studied or on related ones (for example, James Clavell's Shogun, Warhol's Frankenstein, and

Golding's Lord of the Flies), see movies in class, or watch television programs or films in local theatres (for example, an older or a contemporary version of Frankenstein). Out of students' reading of the works and participating in related activities will come impromptu in-class writing and out-of-class compositions.

Representative writing assignments in this divided-self course consist of essays on single works, essays on two or more works (one of which might be a film, play, or television program), research papers, and personal experience narratives or essays. Students might write essays on one theme (the master-slave reversal) or on one stylistic device (multiple narratives) in Frankenstein or Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. Or an essay might compare and contrast the novel Frankenstein with one of its film versions or with "The Enemy Within," a Star Trek episode. In fact, that Star Trek episode (available in James Blish's Star Trek 8 [Bantam, 1972]) has the potential for comparison-contrast with numerous other divided-self works--for example, its wolf-lamb dichotomy with the wolf-man dichotomy in Steppenwolf; its ubiquitous "twin," "double," and "opposite" references with those in Conrad's The Secret Sharer. In addition to Star Trek episodes, other popular movies or television series such as Altered States and The Incredible Hulk might be used with Frankenstein, Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, and The Secret Sharer.

Research papers may also develop from the reading that students do in this course. A subject for a study of the interplay between biography and literary works might be David Storey, a contemporary British novelist and playwright. Torn between his roles as miner/rugby player (the latter a role he assumed to appease his parents and community, who valued physical work) and painter/writer (the role he preferred), Storey exhibits a conflict easily understood by many students. In this course students might read Storey's autobiographical essay, "Journey through a Tunnel," and one or more of his works dealing with the two temperaments described in his essay. The "physical" side is depicted in the novel and film This Sporting Life (rugby), the plays The Changing Room (rugby) and The Contractor (tent erection), and parts of the novel Saville (shocking wheat); the "intuitive," in the play Life Class (art school), the novel A Temporary Life (art school), and parts of the novel Saville (writing poetry and teaching). More advanced students might be interested in another type of research: into relationships between writers, for example, Sylvia Plath and Dostoyevsky, the subject of her thesis, "The Magic Mirror: A Study of the Double in Two of Dostoyevsky's Novels."

After writing analyses of individual or several works and research papers, students might do a personal experience essay. This piece of writing (unlike the impromptu one at the beginning of the course) would be written in a rough draft out of class, discussed during conferences with the teacher, and then revised. Originating from the students' untutored recall of their experiences, it could now incorporate the perspective achieved through their study of the works in this course. In one such essay a student used as an epigraph a statement from Hesse's Demian to illuminate her own split between cheerleader and feminist temperaments. Another tried to match content and style in an essay on his impulsive versus his practical, pragmatic side. First, the essay was divided into two parts. Next, he took, as he said, "liberties in punctuation and grammatical construction" in the first part (on his impulsive side).

The second part of the essay (on his practical, pragmatic side) was, the student perceptively observed, "unfortunately, too successful."

Teachers and students will discover many benefits from a divided-self course. First, because of the variety (in both classics and popular literature), the material can be adapted to any level of student. Second, the material lends itself admirably to discussion of various composition and literary matters (writing as process, point of view, multiple narratives, foreshadowing [especially evident in hints of the double's appearance]), and the use of several genres (not only fiction but also drama and poetry). Finally, the divided self constitutes an ideal topic for interdisciplinary approaches: literature and psychology, sociology, philisophy, religion, music (for example, Schumann), and art (Picasso). The versatility of this material is exhibited in those last two examples--far removed from the "found" divided-self items such as the Newsweek cover mentioned at the beginning of this essay.

These benefits are perceived by teachers and students on not only intellectual but also emotional levels. Teachers find rewarding both the content of the works studied and the students' essays on the works. Evidence of the students' affirmative responses appears in their course evaluations. In my classes they have expressed appreciation for the diversity of material (in the books and short stories, films, plays, and television programs) and the universality of the theme. One wrote, "I didn't know the 'double' existed except in certain cases until I took this course. The diversity of books really helped clarify that different selves are apparent in everyone;" and another, "This course opened up new vistas for exploration within my own self."

Such tributes reveal that, with resourcefulness and imagination, English teachers can make the arcane subject of the divided self appealing to high school and college students. Whether their classes contain students attracted to Eerie or "The Double as Immortal Self," students interested in computers or William Golding (or in neither), teachers will find sufficient material for absorbing reading and writing assignments.

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"WRITING IS REWRITING"

by
Frank Cronin

Since Donald M. Murray first wrote these words and called for research on revision, they have been frequently quoted in a growing body of substantial research on revision and interpretative essays on that research, personal experience and interviews on the revision experiences of famous writers.[1] Simiilarly, Peter Elbow sees revision as a continuing process of "discovering meaning."[2] The first draft is only a small step near the beginning of a discovery process which, in the view of revision researchers, means cycles of rewriting that alternate with new periods of incubation, brainstorming and most other prewriting strategies.

For Murray, there are two principal forms of revision, internal revision, "everything writers do to discover and develop what they say,"[3] and external revision, "what writers do to communicate what they have found they have written to another audience,"[4] i.e., people other than themselves. In internal revision, writers explore and refashion raw material from the unconscious which is organized according to their processes of discovery. However, writers communicate to readers best through reason and logic; thus Murray's external revision begins after the revision cycles that discover additional meaning.

Ironically, novice writers view revision as almost exclusively as a "cleanup" process: editing, etc.--and usually do a poor job of editing and proofreading for reasons which I will subsequently explain. As Linda Flower and so many other researchers have pointed out, novice writers usually hand in their first draft of writer-based prose. Consequently, novice writers commonly assume that they have communicated in writing--until a few years later--in the real world, employers or managers who want and need the written information launch into complaints--sometimes bitter--that they cannot understand reports, which are essentially unrevised first drafts. They are then given or thrown back to the bewildered authors for revision into reader-based prose.

School revision often has other fatal flaws: for example, artificially imposed assignments on which students have nothing to say or about which they do not care deeply and no real audience whom they can interest and inform--and thus no real rhetorical purpose. When these conditions prevail, revision is nothing more than an unpleasant surface cleanup exercise to get the teacher off one's back.

Revision can only be learned when writers have their own subjects in which they are seeped, about which they are enthusiastic and have something to say to a real audience, usually classmates. Only then will the creative unconscious operate with the result that revision becomes a process of discovery and writers begin to become enthusiastic about revising.

Unfortunately, the research of Sondra Perl and Mike Rose (and my own research) reveals novice writers revising, "preoccupied with cleaning up surface writing problems and checking to see if they have violated any grammar rules, in other words, editing rather than actually revising."[5] The picture of the novice writers that emerges from recent research is that of a person who is so preoccupied with the avoidance of mechanical error that the creative-revision process is stifled. Even though Perl's early research was with inner-city basic writers who were college freshmen and Rose's research was with blocked writers, the same picture emerges in the research of all the other more distinguished composition researchers in our field.

For example, in Nancy I. Sommers' research, high school seniors revealed a highly consistent set of revision strategies which "occur in a very narrow range."[6] Their revision consisted primarily of word substitution; they were somewhat "thesaurus-happy," operating on the assumption, gleaned from teacher-emphasis on vocabulary, that "high-register" vocabulary was a prime concern of professional (successful) writers from the start, "a belief that if there is a problem in the composition that it can be solved by rewording."[7] Their second concern was lexical deletions to make their writing "less wordy." Their third concern was correcting sentences, chiefly to make them conform to grammatical prescriptions.

In addition, other self-destructive assumptions guided the revision processes of Sommers' student writers--assumptions gleaned from teachers, rhetoric texts and misunderstandings of both. Three of the more prominent were: revision was essentially a mechanical process governed by "a finite set of rules;" students strictly limited by themselves by their initial thesis statements, thus stifling the development of their ideas; all eight student writers in Sommers' study--learned to avoid difficult, unfamiliar subjects, and chose the familiar path in order to get the assignment over with as quickly and as easily as possible.

Even as the student subjects of Sommers' (and others') research developed their trite and familiar subjects, they were vaguely aware of larger organizational problems, but lacked the means or the motivation to deal with them. Concern for communicating their ideas to any real audience scarcely entered into their narrow, mechanical revision processes. In brief, these student writers were often overwhelmed by the large number of constraints that they tried to face at once. They were so preoccupied with surface problems (word choice, etc.) that they were psychologically blocked from attending to deeper compositional problems (organization, focus, logical explanations, clear audience orientation, putting in the necessary specifics for audiences, etc.)[8]

Thus novice writers are not only psychologically blocked by the frequent, heavy negative feedback they have received in school, but they are also trying to do what is psychologically impossible, trying to deal with too many constraints, too many writing problems, at once. I have repeated this point because it is the crux of the problem of the failure of student attempts to revise and their subsequent discouragement. Even the mind of a genius can consciously attend to only a very few things at one time!

Experienced writers cope with this psychological bottleneck through a writing and revising process that is cyclical and evolutionary, i.e., they attend to only a few specific problems in each cycle and defer all others. For example, in their first few drafts they focus on getting their ideas down on paper and thinking them out. Reworking material for specific audiences becomes the focus in later revisions--each cycle of which may deal with only a few specific problems. Their heavy attention to surface problems (proofreading) comes only at the very end of their revision process. In other words "skilled, adult writers employ strategies to handle the overload on their attention."[9] They have acquired a wide range of revision strategies through practice, and use some of them almost unconsciously to cope with what psycholinguists call the bottleneck of conscious attention. (I will explain these strategies further on).

An ironic and instructive footnote to these research findings is the fact that skilled writers are often quite ashamed of their first drafts because they are so crude, undeveloped and pedestrian in thought and expression. Ironically, when high school and freshman college students hand in what are essentially first drafts, they are often demoralized by the heavy negative feedback they receive and conclude that they can never learn to write well. If only they knew about the actual experiences of skilled writers! Their own evolutionary processes had scarcely started!

As we have seen, students have received so much negative feedback concerning grammar, spelling and punctuation that they tend to be somewhat blocked from attending to deeper compositional problems by obsession with these surface elements, both in writing the first draft and in revision. Therefore, the first therapeutic step is to encourage them to ignore surface problems while they are working out their ideas in the first few drafts. Paradoxically, correction of surface problems will happen almost automatically in the writing of the first draft as they mature as writers because prior experience, that is careful attention to surface problems in the last stages of revision, editing and proofreading, will have so filled their long term memory (unconscious memory banks) with editing widom (x-ray vision) that a great deal of virtually automatic editing will happen even in the midst of the surge of the first draft's creative flow, as it does for ourselves.

Research studies of skilled writers (e.g. Sommers, Nold, Flower and others) prompted subsequent researchers to repudiate the linear stage model as partial and incomplete in favor of a paradigm of the composing process that is both linear and recursive. (By recursive, I mean the writer's repeatedly doubling back to an earlier stage of the writing process and repeating its activities and strategies, or simply going back over the written text to perform a new revision activity (e.g. putting in transitions) or to use again a previously used strategy on the same text (e.g. rewriting and rewriting again trying to reach the objectivity and disinterested and even the cold, critical detachment of the reader and also "zero in" precisely on a specific target audience with its unique background, prejudices, lack of knowledge, etc.)

It is particularly in research on the revision processes of skilled writers that recursiveness appears to be central. In Nancy Sommers research, skilled writers go through cycle after cycle of revision. Since the human mind can only consciously attend to a very few compositional problems at one time, skilled writers deal with this universal human constraint by concentrating on solving a specific few in each cycle--as we have seen.

Research on the revision processes of skilled writers reveals a whole range of activities--conscious and unconscious, that don't exist at all in the composing process of novice writers. As Linda Flower notes, novice writers are not even working on the same problems as skilled writers.

These findings are strongly confirmed by Lillian S. Bridwell's research which unlike Nancy Sommers', was concerned exclusively with high school seniors. She found that most student revisions were at the surface level, and verbal, specifically: "surface level (24.83%), lexical level (31.24%), phrase level (18.00%), clause level (6.31%), sentence level (7.81%), and multiple-sentence level (11.80%)."[10] As Nold observes, these novice writers were "stuck on words," and viewed revision as "finding the right word."[11]

In Bridwell's research, those with the highest ratings made more revisions than those with the lowest ratings, and the weakest writers revised the least.[12] (These findings support an earlier, informal study by Richard Beach).[13]

Beach's study is one of the earliest studies on revision. In fact, until recently there was little research on revision and not a great deal on the whole composing process; in recent years, however, there has been such a burst of high quality research that a substantial base has been provided for developing practical suggestions to guide high school and freshman college writers through the revision process.

In general this new revision research makes it clear that skilled writers revise extensively, while unskilled writers hardly revise at all as we have seen. Skilled writers tend to see all writing as rewriting and go through many drafts; thus they see their original ideas as seeds or embryos--to be developed through revision and reflection.

FOOTNOTES

[1] See Donald M. Murray, "Internal Revision: A Process of Discovery" in Research on Composing: Points of Departure, Charles R. Cooper and Lee Odell, Eds. (N.C.T.E., 1978); reprinted in Donald M. Murray, Learning by Teaching (Montclair, N.J.: Boynton Cook Publishers, 1982), pp. 72-88; in this new and very useful book, Murray includes a rich abundance of teaching strategies. For example, "Making Meaning Clear: The Logic of Revision," (pp. 88-95) is particularly good; for another good, recently published book which is also rich in practical classroom tips as well as background explanations of recent research for the busy teacher, see Revising: New Essays For Teachers of Writing Ed., Ronald A. Sudol. (N.C.T.E., 1982).

[2] Peter Elbow, Writing Without Teachers (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), pp. 12-75.

[3] Murray, p. 91 (Cooper-Odell Anthology).

[4] Murray, p. 91 (Cooper-Odell Anthology).

[5] Sondra Perl, "The Composing Processes of Unskilled College Writers," Research in the Teaching of English 13, 4 (December 1979), 317-36; Mike Rose, "Rigid Rules, Inflexible Plans, and the Stifling of Language: A Cognitivist Analysis of Writer's Block," College Composition and Communication 31, 4 (December 1980), 389-401.

[6] Nancy Sommers, Revision in the Composing Process: A Case Study of College Freshman and Experienced Adult Writers. (Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Boston University, 1978); Nancy Sommers, "Revision Strategies of Student Writers and Experienced Adult Writers," College Composition and Communication 31 (1980) 378-387.

[7] Sommers Dissertation, p. 86. All future references will be to the Sommers dissertation.

[8] See also Ellen W. Nold, "Revising" in Writing: The Nature, Development and Teaching of Written Composition, eds. Carl H. Frederiksen and Joseph F. Dominic (Hillsdale, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers, 1981), The Nold Essay is in Vol. II, pp. 67-79; these two volumes of reports on recent research are very expensive but would be available on interlibrary loan or at a nearby university.

[9] Nold, p. 68.

[10] Lillian S. Bridwell, Revising Processes in Twelfth Grade Students' Transactional Writing. (Unpublished doctoral dissertation, The University of Georgia, 1979), p. 142; see also L.S. Bridwell, "Revising Strategies in Twelfth Grade Students' Transactional Writing," Research in the Teaching of English, 1980.) 14, 197-222.

[11] Nold, p. 67.

[12] Bridwell, p. 142.

[13] Richard Beach, "Self-Evaluation Strategies of Extensive Revisers and Non-Revisers," College Composition and Communication 27 (1976), 160-164; a number of researchers seem to have demonstrated that reviewing (and revising) and planning are "late-developing abilities" for a concise summary of this research. See Nold, p. 69 et seq. In brief, children only begin to be aware of audience perspective at about the sixth grade, and cannot use this dawning insight to revise until much later. Two studies reported in Eric Document 154, 433, C.S. 204 174 by Robert Bracewell and others suggest that students are not able to effectively revise for a specific audience until grade twelve. In another study reported in E.D. 141 826 (CS 203 528) younger children e.g. thirteen year olds were successful in revising letters of complaint, etc. especially those who were children of educated parents and grew up in suburban areas.

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A REVIEW OF RESEARCH ON REVISION

by
Kathryn Hancock

If Woody Allen was right when he said, "The hardest part of writing is getting from nothing to the first draft," then the second hardest part must be taking that sweat-covered first draft and subjecting it to numerous revisions. To an experienced writer, this process often feels as if one is chewing his or her left arm into a new shape, leaving bits of muscle and bone by the wayside.

If revision is that painful to experienced writers, we can imagine its effect on novices--high school and college freshmen writers who often feel that the first draft alone wrenched something loose that they'll never get back into place again. Teachers, too, recognize the tremendous amount of work involved in teaching students to revise, which may well explain why this important step in the writing process is often overlooked in composition classes, or at least reduced to the level of proofreading.

However, recent research has pointed to revision, or the ability to reconceptualize and restructure thoughts on the page, as one of the best methods of improving writing. In fact a recent study by George Hillocks Jr. indicated that students taught to revise actually produce better first drafts in subsequent writing assignments. With statements like this being made about revision, we may find a review of research into revision and its impact on the teaching of composition very helpful. To do this, we must first look at the research dealing with how students perceive revision, then we can look at what research shows us about methods of teaching revision.

HOW STUDENTS SEE REVISION

Several studies have shown that students revise mostly on a surface level (Bridwell, 1979; Sommers, 1980; Faigley and Witte, 1981). This "thesaurus philosophy of revision," as Nancy Sommers calls it, involves mainly word substitution, sentence rearrangement, and mechanical corrections. (No doubt this proofreading approach to revision has been fostered by teachers, who emphasize correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation over the more complex elements of content and organization.) Sommers and other researchers have shown that experienced writers, however, see revision as a process of discovery, a way of finding the framework, pattern, or design of their argument. Revision, to a professional writer, often involves selecting one idea from pages of written matter, reconceptualizing it, then restructuring a new framework around it. After this is done, the writer often goes back again (and again) to make both conceptual and surface changes in what he or she has written. Obviously, this recursive method of writing and revision contradicts the present linear view of the writing process, that of separate, distinct stages of prewriting, writing, and revision. It also plays havoc with a syllabus organized neatly around these stages, for no longer is there a clear end to prewriting and a clear beginning of revision. Instead, the student must now be taught that prewriting, writing, and revision often go on concurrently, with attention to grammar, spelling, and punctuation coming only when the "meat" (content and organization) of the paper is satisfactory.

So how do we find time to introduce this new recommended view of revision to our students? The answer, according to researchers, lies in a number of strategies.

HELPING STUDENTS TO LEARN REVISION

Several methods of helping students to learn revision, such as teacher comments on papers and classroom strategies including peer evaluation and exercises stressing audience awareness, have been studied recently to determine their effectiveness in helping students improve their writing. These studies have produced some information worth noting.

The Effectiveness of Teacher Comments--Teacher comments have been around since the invention of red pencils, no doubt. Their purpose has been varied: to dramatize the audience's presence, to point out lexical weaknesses, and to note mechanical errors, to mention a few. Recently, researchers such as Stephen and Susan Judy, George Hillocks, Nancy Sommers, and Nina Ziv have looked into the effectiveness of these comments in helping students improve their papers. Both Sommers and Ziv found that explicit, text-specific comments, or those that point out specific problems in the paper and then give suggestions for improvement, seem to work best with inexperienced writers. Examples of this type of comment would be, "Your concluding paragraph seems to contradict the body of your paper, especially the points made in the second paragraph. Formulate a new conclusion which supports these points," or "Change this sentence to the active voice."

Ziv, although her research lacks the breadth that fosters conclusive results, offers the plausible belief that students inexperienced with methods of revision benefit more from explicit comments because the comments not only create an awareness of audience, but also direct the student toward the kind of improvement the teacher has in mind. Implicit comments, or those of a general nature such as "Needs to be reworded for clarity," or, "Are you saying what you really want to say here?" are like yelling to a swimming student, "You're not stroking right!" as she goes down for the third time. These comments seldom benefit novice writers because they often don't know how to reword for clarity, or they truly believe they communicated exactly what they wanted to say. Implicit comments, according to Ziv, are effective only when students become familiar with various revision strategies.

George Hillocks continued Sommers' and Ziv's exploration into teacher comments by studying the effectiveness of both brief and extensive comments in conjunction with the variables of classroom instruction, prewriting, writing, and revision. Hillocks studied three groups of students. The first received specific instruction relevant to the writing process, then were allowed to prewrite, write, then revise their papers based on teacher comments. The second group wrote their papers without benefit of specific instruction or prewriting, but were allowed to revise according to teacher comments. The third group received assignments only and were not allowed to revise their work, although teachers still made comments on their papers. Hillocks found that, overall, brief comments are just as effecive as extensive comments in helping students to improve their papers; however, when paried with the different variables mentioned above, extensive comments proved the most beneficial to students who were involved in prewriting, writing, and revision, and brief comments appeared to be the most effective for students who did only the assignment and did not involve themselves with either prewriting or revision. Hillocks believes that further research into the variables involved in teaching composition will produce information on which combinations are most effective in helping students.

One of the major problems Nancy Sommers found surrounding the use of teacher comments was the tendency for teachers to point out content and organizational flaws along with lexical and mechanical errors. As Sommers points out, "Students are commanded to edit and develop at the same time," as they attempt to follow contradictory comments such as, "This paragraph needs to be shortened or cut out entirely," right beside, "You need to insert a comma here in this sentence." Thus the student is left believing he or she should add a comma before deleting the sentence and its surrounding paragraph. Sommers recommends that teachers alleviate this problem by creating different levels of comments suitable to the level of draft they're evaluating.

Classroom Strategies--Of course, the change in teacher comments from emphasis on general corrections and criticisms to specific recommendations for revision needs to be reinforced by various classroom strategies. First of all, students need to become acquainted with what true revision entails through class discussion and exercises. Many students come into composition classes believing their first drafts are divinely inspired and should not be tampered with. As Nancy Sommers states, "We need to sabotage our students' convictions that the drafts they have written are complete and coherent." Class discussion and peer evaluation of papers are often effective ways of getting this point across.

Second, students must be given the opportunity to revise the same papers that teachers comment upon. "To offer a successful revision strategy to a student," notes Sommers, "the teacher must anchor that strategy in the specifics of the students' text." Thus, the old maxim of, "apply these comments to your next paper," is not the most effective means of helping students improve their writing. Teachers must develop strategies in both assigning and grading papers that will allow students a chance to revise according to the teacher's suggestions.

Third, classroom discussion and teacher comments are most effective when they reinforce each other, according to both George Hillocks and Nancy Sommers. Teachers can make sure their comments will be the most helpful when the student can relate them back to ideas discussed in class.

There's no doubt that revision is a complex and difficult task to teach beginning writers. As most composition teachers wail, "I'm lucky if I can get them to write one draft!" But the necessity of teaching students to write in the clearest, most concise manner possible dictates that we take heed of the latest research into revision and apply some of its findings and recommendations to our groups of soon-to-be-experienced writers.

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HEMISPHERIC INTEGRATION IN COMPOSING[1]

by
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There is increasing evidence that the two cerebral hemispheres of the human brain are not functionally equivalent, but rather represent two distinct systems, subdivided into a number of subsystems centered in different lobes. Under everyday circumstances, those two entities interact such that one cannot distinguish their predominant activities or separate capacities. However, through the study of brain-injured and neurosurgical patients as well as through various physiological techniques used in the study of normal subjects, these distinct differences in hemispheric functioning become evident.

Until fairly recently, neuroscience investigators of higher psychological behaviors have paid attention chiefly to the structures of the left, so-called "dominant" hemisphere because of its apparent responsibility for language processing. The right hemisphere was regarded as merely responsible for directing simple motor activities and capable of only preliminary analysis of sensory input. However, in the past thirty years, reports of specific cognitive deficits as a result of right cerebralinjuries have accumulated, that hemisphere increasingly recognized as playing important roles in human thinking. We owe much of what we know about these separate functions to the split-brain studies of Roger Sperry and his associates at Cal Tech. They developed special testing techniques which isolated input to one or the other of the hemispheres of patients whose cerebral connections were surgically severed in an effort to control the disabling effects of severe epilepsy. These tests revealed the presence of two brains within one body. Sensory input to the left hemisphere could be reported verbally. Similar inputs to the right hemisphere could not; in fact, patients would deny having perceived anything. Tests which did not require a verbal response, however, revealed that the right hemispheres of these patients did have lives of their own. For example, when a word was projected to the right hemisphere, the patient would deny having seen anything but would be able to retrieve the object denoted from a series placed out of view with his left hand. The right hand, on the other hand, would be incapable of performing the task (Gazzaniga, 1970).

This series of studies confirmed and expanded earlier findings of clinical examinations which suggested that the left hemisphere excels in verbal processing and in calculation while the right hemisphere is superior in such spatial tasks as drawing, arranging blocks to match a pattern, recognizing faces, and performing mazes. As a result, the original concept of hemispheric dominance gave way to one of hemispheric specialization. Each of our cerebral hemispheres is able to learn, remember and perceive. Although most higher behaviors appear to result from a continuous interaction of the two, each hemisphere is specialized and separately analyzes the information it receives. In general, these data suggest that for all right handed and most left handed adults, the left hemisphere, which is responsible for motor control of the right side of the body, is analytic and particularistic, processing information sequentially over time. Among its principal activities are language and calculation. The right hemisphere, which is responsible for left side motor control, is holistic and relational in processing; it integrates many inputs in one simultaneous gestalt operation. Among the right hemisphere's principal activities are those synthetic tasks which involve spatial conceptualization, including orientation in space, music, drawing and construction.

While left hemisphere processes are considered primarily verbal and while language is most seriously disrupted by injury to that hemisphere, considerable evidence now suggests that the right hemisphere understands language (Zaidel 1976, 1977) and that it makes significant contributions to language activity. While left hemisphere processes are crucial to articulation, denotation and the conscious rule-governed functions, right hemisphere processes play important roles in affective functions including imagery, connotation and our sense of emotional appropriateness in discourse (Gardner, 1974; Luria, 1980). These findings suggest new directions for composition theory and research and lend new meaning to James Britton's (1971) assertion that language "is inextricably interwoven with other forms of representation" (p. 206). The late Soviet neuropsychologist A.R. Luria (1971) has singled out writing as an especially powerful instrument of thought precisely because of its integrative features--its ability to exist independently of on-going events which allows for the merging of analysis and synthesis. Although writing represents itself in a linear form, composing's processes incorporate non-linear modes of thought as well.

Our recent research in composing suggests just such an interplay of analytic and holistic thought in the processes of mature writers and further indicates that what may be at the heart of most student writers' difficulties is their failure to engage in the latter. Nancy Sommers (1980), for example, found that expert writers' revisions occurred far more frequently on a ddeper semantic level than those of student writers, in what she called a "complicated relationship between the parts and the whole . . ." (p. 385). She identified as the two crucial elements which student writers most often lack: 1) "the adoption of a holistic perspective," and 2) "the perception that revision is a recursive process." Similarly, Linda Flower and Richard Hayes (1980) found that although experienced adult writers actively search for a "coherent network of ideas", novices are passively tied to their topics, "merely trying to express a network of ideas already formed and available in memory" and "primarily concerned with the features and conventions of written texts" (p. 38).

By adapting a methodology developed by Leonide Goldstein of the Institute of Mental Health Sciences, CMDNJ--Rutgers Medical School, one based on the electrocortical measures of the EEG, I was able to examine the relative activation of the left and right hemispheres which accompanied two brief episodes of composing each by twenty-four college students (Glassner, 1982). The study relied on the amplitude integration method of EEG signals analysis which is well-established in the literature of neuropsychology. The participation of the two hemispheres can be detected as their activities are manifested in the relative amplitude of brain waves. The interhemispheric EEG (a method which compares the relative amplitude levels of matched sites in the left and right hemispheres) is a sensitive indicator of a number of behavior states. For fixed periods (in this case, five seconds), EEG amplitude levels can be measured electronically and converted into digital form. These separate values are then subject to quantitative and statistical analyses based on their distribution over time. When dealing with signals obtained simultaneously from symmetrical placements over the left and right hemispheres, we can examine their relationships by computing the ratios. Of particular interest is the arithmetic difference between each individual ratio and that for an entire recording period because it provides a chronological representation of relative shifts in left and right hemisphere processing. In healthy right-handed subjects, clusters of relative hemispheric activity occur, indicating shifts toward higher relative right hemisphere activation during non-verbal thinking and toward higher relative hemispheric activation during verbal thinking. Such shifts have been demonstrated, for example, in transcranial temporal and parietal lobe recordings as subjects engaged in verbal and musical tasks (Goldstein, 1979; McKee et al., 1973) and in temporal recordings as subjects engaged in verbal and visual tasks (Galin and Ornstein, 1972).

Although left hemisphere functions have been shown to be primarily verbal, right hemisphere functions non-verbal, I expected that such differences would be demonstrated in writing depending on the types of discourse and the strategies the writers used in composing. Because the amplitude integration method provides a relative measure of hemispheric engagement, this approach seemed promising. Such differences, in fact, have been demonstrated in a study by Ornstein, Herron and Johnstone (1979) which found greater relative right hemisphere involvement in the reading of highly imagistic prose as compared to the reading of highly technical prose when recordings were obtained over the temporal lobes.

I obtained bilateral temporal lobe recordings for each of twenty-four right handed college students during a baseline pre-instruction period and then during ten minutes of composing each to two assignments: Task A--to factually describe a process, how something is done or made, and Task B--to recall a closely-felt personal experience. During the recordings, I observed writing behaviors and made notes on the direct time-courses tracings of the EEG signals. Immediately following the recordings, subjects responded orally to a printed questionnaire designed to elicit their accounts of their thoughts, feelings and operations while composing.

I divided performances on each task into two independent groups, those accompanied by a relative shift to the left hemisphere and those accompanied by a relative shift to the right hemisphere. In the first level of analysis, I considered the effects of the two assignments. These were not significant, both assignments resulting in relative shifts to both hemispheres, slightly more than half in a predominant left hemisphere shift. In the second level of analysis, I considered the features of the written products themselves. These were holistically rated on a six-point scale derived from Emig's (1971) description of the features of extensive and reflexive products. I expected those written during relative left hemisphere shifts would be judged closer to the extensive pole, that is, focusing on communication, the writer's role apparent active, and the style assured, impersonal and reportorial. I expected those accompanied by a relative right shift would be rated closer to the reflexive pole. Such writing focuses on the writer's thoughts and feelings, her apparent role contemplative, the style tentative, personal and exploratory. Again, no significant effect was evident; in fact, the assignments themselves proved to be more significant influences on these features than shifts in hemispheric laterality.

However, I did find a significant relationship between differences in the composing strategies of writers and relative shifts in hemispheric engagement ($p < .05$ for Task A; $p < .005$ for Task B). Here three independent judges holistically rated process features on a six-point scale derived from Emig's (1971) description of the features of extensive and reflexive composing. These ratings were based on the reading of typed transcripts of the writer's retrospective accounts of their composing. Accounts of composing that had been accompanied by a relative left hemisphere shift were judged closer to the extensive pole. In extensive composing, the content of the discourse is familiar, the writer's primary concern with communicating what has already been formulated. The process is smooth, direct and linear, revision concerned primarily with surface features. Accounts of relative right hemisphere composing were judged closer to the reflexive pole. In reflexive composing, the writer is primarily concerned with discovering form and meaning. Her process is non-linear and recursive, revision extensive and experimental. Images, both visual and felt, more often figure into these processes.

These findings suggest that regardless of task or the features of the products themselves, distinct differences in the strategies of writers are apparent in the examination of composing processes and further that these differences appear to be related to the relative activation of the left and right hemispheres. However, in writing as in other higher psychological functions, hemispheric activation is not an all-or-nothing affair. These analyses considered the overall trends in each composing period. What is missed by such an approach are the dynamics of individual composing performances. The examination of individual cases revealed a shuttling back and forth between these modes. These shifts in activity were correlated with the expected clusterings of extended left and right hemisphere activity.

While the conclusions drawn from this study are tentative owing to the small sample and the limited composing time observed, they suggest that the types of composing processes and activities most characteristic of students' writing may represent the engagement of but half their brains. These are the very activities that traditional writing instruction and assignments encourage; they often merely ask students to report information, to tap memory, and to address only the more conscious rule-governed functions of language. These preliminary findings suggest that if our models of composing processes and the resulting pedagogical strategies are to be complete, we must account for the contributions of both halves of our brain.

FOOTNOTE

[1] This paper is based on a dissertation study completed at Rutgers University with the cooperation of the Department of Psychiatry--Research, Institute of Mental Health Sciences, CMDNJ--Rutgers Medical School and with funding from the NCTE Research Foundation.

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DO ROOM ASSIGNMENTS AFFECT STUDENTS' TEST SCORES?

by
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Betty M. Eberle, and Robert Zenhausern

Certain students complain that they cannot do their best on tests because the rooms in which they are given are "too bright"--particularly on a sunny day. Others say they "cannot think because it is too quiet," or when they have to work at a "hard seat" and desk; such youngsters believe they have longer attention spans when concentrating in an informal environment such as on a couch, a lounge chair, a bed or on carpeted floors. Should teachers consider such statements seriously? Before you decide, examine the results of a recent study conducted in a large, midwestern high school in Ohio.

Method

Subjects

A total population of 359 students in grades 9-12 of an Ohio high school comprised the sample for this study. A subsample of 120 of the 30 students who revealed the most extreme preferences for the processing style of the right or left hemisphere also was identified. It should be noted that six youngsters revealed no differences between their right and left scores and were excluded from further analysis.

Materials

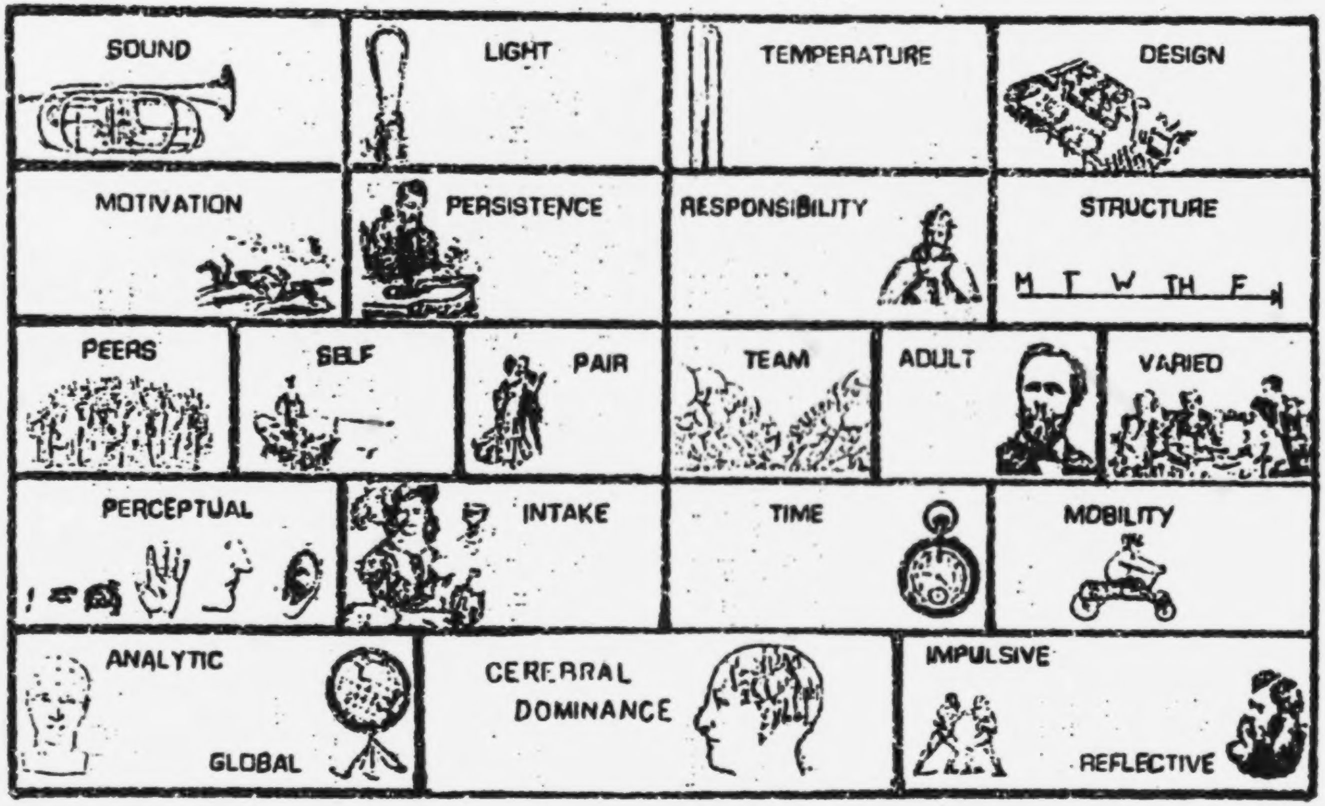
Learning Style Inventory.

Developed through content and factor analysis, the Learning Style Inventory (LSI) is a comprehensive approach to the identification of an individual's learning style. The instrument analyzes the conditions under which students in Grades 3-12 prefer to learn through an assessment of each of the following areas: (a) immediate enviornment (sound, light, temperature and the preference for either a formal or an informal design); (b) emotionality (motivation, persistence, responsibility and either structure or options); (c) sociological needs (self, pair, peer or adult orientations, and/or varied groupings); and (d) physical characteristics (perceptual preferences, intake, time of day or night and mobility versus passibity). See Figure 1.

The LSI uses dichotomous items and can be completed in approximately 30 to 40 minutes. It reports a Consistency Key which reveals the accuracy with which each respondent has answered its questions. Ohio State University's National Center for Research in Vocational Education published the results of its two-year study of instruments that identify learning style and verified that the LSI has "established impressive reliability and face and construct validity." (Kirby, 1979)

Figure 1

DIAGNOSING LEARNING STYLES



STIMULI	ELEMENTS					
ENVIRONMENTAL	SOUND	LIGHT	TEMPERATURE	DESIGN		
EMOTIONAL	MOTIVATION	PERSISTENCE	RESPONSIBILITY	STRUCTURE		
SOCIOLOGICAL	PEERS	SELF	PAIR	TEAM	ADULT	VARIED
PHYSICAL	PERCEPTUAL	INTAKE	TIME	MOBILITY		
PSYCHOLOGICAL	ANALYTIC GLOBAL	CEREBRAL DOMINANCE	IMPULSIVE REFLECTIVE			

DESIGNED BY: RITA DUNN
KENNETH DUNN

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Differential Hemispheric Activation.

The test for hemispheric activation consists of 26 items on which subjects indicate their relative abilities or preferences concerning specific tasks on a 10-point scale. Fifteen items assess right hemispheric ability (e.g., How good is your sense of direction? How good is your visual imagery?) and 11 items assess left hemispheric ability (e.g., How good are you at crossword puzzles? How good are you at thinking of synonyms?) The mean difference between right and left-directed items provides a measure of relative hemispheric preference--or activation. The test has evidenced constructive validity in the areas of thinking style, maze learning and the perception of emotion (Zenhausern, 1980).

Procedure

Both the Learning Style Inventory and the Differential Hemispheric Activation test were administered by the same researcher in classroom settings. All the directions for completing the two instruments were held constant.

Results of the Analyses

The mean difference between right and left scores was determined for all students and ranked. Decile ranks were calculated for male and female right and left scores; those data appear in Table I. Interpretation is straightforward. For example, a male Left who reveals a difference of .464 between his right and left scores, ranks in the 50th percentile of all the male Lefts that were tested.

The statistical analysis determined whether individuals whose LSI subscales (sound, light, design, motivation and so forth) were significant, differed from the total population that evidenced either Left or Right hemispheric preferences. The student's test was used to decide whether the mean of the subgroup for each LSI subscale was significantly different from the mean of the total population.

Subjects were classified as either utilizing or not utilizing a particular learning style on the basis of either scoring or not scoring in the upper third of each LSI subscale. The two resulting groups were compared using the difference between their right and left scores on the HPT (Right score minus Left score). Those data were subjected to tests, and those that reached significance are presented in Table 2.

Table I
Norms for the Population of High School Students
On the Hemispheric Preference Test

Male Left		Male Right	
Percentile	Difference	Percentile	Difference
10	.107	10	.179
20	.179	20	.357
30	.250	30	.464
40	.393	40	.536
50	.464	50	.714

60	.537	60	.857
70	.680	70	1.036
80	.787	80	1.179
90	1.000	90	1.536
$\bar{x}$	.53	$\bar{x}$	.79
SD	.38	SD	.55
Range	.036 - 1.750	Range	.036 - 2.250
N	68	N	105

Female Left		Female Right	
Percentile	Difference	Percentile	Difference
10	.107	10	.143
20	.179	20	.214
30	.250	30	.357
40	.321	40	.500
50	.429	50	.608
60	.536	60	.714
70	.750	70	.857
80	1.036	80	1.107
90	1.357	90	1.357
$\bar{x}$	.60	$\bar{x}$	.68
SD	.48	SD	.46
Range	.036 - 1.893	Range	.036 - 2.786
N	48	N	126

Table 2

Significant Preference Difference Scores for LSI Subgroups

LSI Subscale	Difference Scores for those in LSI subgroups	N	Difference Scores for those in LSI subgroups	N	t	Sig
2 Sound acceptable	6.48	155	-2.97	198	2.42	.01
4 Requires low light	7.79	121	-2.81	232	3.20	.01
8 Requires informal design	6.78	115	-3.42	238	2.36	.01
12 Unmotivated	6.80	129	-3.21	224	2.42	.01
13 Persistent	-3.03	254	8.33	99	2.09	.05
14 Not persistent	8.37	47	-3.93	306	2.85	.01
20 Prefers learning with peers	6.86	111	-3.56	242	2.03	.05
27 Has tactile preferences	7.22	122	-3.09	231	2.81	.01

NOTE: Negative scores indicate higher Left than Right scores.

These results indicate that students who: (1) are not bothered by sound; (2) prefer dim illumination; (3) require an informal design; (4) are unmotivated; (5) are not persistent; (6) prefer learning with peers, and (7) prefer tactile stimulation, scored significantly more Right preferenced than those whose learning styles did not include those elements. In addition, students who were persistent scored more Left preferenced than those whose learning styles did not include that element. Thus, Right and Left preferenced students have different environmental and organizational needs within the classroom as well as different motivational and personality characteristics.

Discussion

A majority of high school students complete required courses but fail to sign up for advanced electives. That should be disturbing to teachers who recognize the need for scientific knowledge and who enjoy teaching the discipline. Perhaps consideration of the characteristics of Right preferenced students might make the subject more attractive to that group.

When assigning students to classrooms, study halls or examination areas, consideration should be given to whether they are Right or Left preferenced individuals. Many high school youngsters may absorb and retain information best in a quiet, well-lit environment, but Right preferenced students appear to be responsive to music, a dimly lit area or reclining on a couch or the floor while studying. Since Restak (1979) verifies that such inclinations are biologically imposed on people, undoubtedly they contribute to how well students concentrate and, therefore, how easily they remember and retain new information. Why not experiment with providing a section of the classroom where youngsters can sit either on the floor or on pillows when completing assignments or taking a test--rather than requiring that everyone sit in a hard seat or at a desk? That would be true for study halls too; many people cannot concentrate in a conventional classroom or auditorium environment. For those who work best with music, try permitting them to wear earplugs so that the sounds on their cassettes (played on their own recorders) do not intrude on the Left preferenced individuals' need for quiet.

Concomitant with their preferences for learning with distractors, Rights appear to be less persistent and responsible than Lefts, suggesting that they would achieve more easily with short--rather than long--assignments, immediate feedback, continuous supervision and frequent encouragement. Those are characteristics of programmed learning, and should the Rights also evidence visual inclinations and a need for structure, a programmed learning sequence that culminates with a tactile reinforcement (task cards, electroboard, learning circles, and so on) should prove to be an effective teaching strategy for such students. Any text can be translated into a programmed learning sequence merely by xeroxing the pages and separating the sections into small segments; those are pasted together into "frames" which then are followed by questions and, on the reverse side, answers and additional explanations. For specific samples and easy-to-follow directions, see Dunn and Dunn, 1978, chapter 5. Chapter 7 of that same book describes how to make different kinds of tactual/kinesthetic resources that supplement programmed learning sequences. If teachers prepare one sample, high school students can use it to make their own programmed material and the resources that complement it. In fact, making such materials for homework (based on the topic being currently taught) would be an excellent way to reinforce the knowledge and skills that should be emphasized.

Since Rights tend to be peer-oriented, it is likely that they will remain on task longer if they are permitted to do their assignments with a friend or two. Excellent small group techniques such as Circle of Knowledge, Team Learning, Case Study or Brainstorming (Dunn and Dunn, 1978, chapter 3) provide an organized, disciplined way for Rights to work together constructively. Those strategies could be read one evening and implemented the next day. Since adolescents tend to be more peer than adult oriented (Learning Styles Newsletter, Autumn, 1980), the use of small group techniques might, in and of itself, produce increased academic achievement and improved attitudes toward the subject.

Experimenting with room assignments for class instruction and test situations might be an important first step. To date, few teachers have considered either learning style or hemispheric preference as variables of achievement. On the basis of this study's data, both require our immediate attention.

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The Differential Hemispheric Activation test is obtainable from Dr. Robert Zenhausern, Department of Psychology, St. John's University, Grand Central Parkway, Jamaica, New York 11439.

The Learning Style Inventory is obtainable through Price Systems, Box 3271, Lawrence, Kansas 66044. Specimen Set: $10.00.

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WHAT STUDIES OF COGNITION TEACH THE TEACHER OF COMPOSITION

by
Ron Luce

Having read numerous articles on cognitive theory--from explications of Piaget to articles by Linda Flower and John R. Hayes--I have come to the realization that study of cognition is a field better left to theorists than to anyone looking for anything resembling concrete application of principles of scientific research. The study of cognition is too young as a field to provide many supportable facts which could be of value to the teacher of composition. The human mind is complex; how students learn is so obviously personalized that any attempt to study and categorize data becomes an awesome task. There is simply too much to know about cognition. So, what can I, a composition teacher who barely has time for reading short articles, let alone volumes of research, learn from the theorists? What generalizations can be inferred from the immensity of what cognitive theorists are tackling? Perhaps all I can know is what I've always believed: that students are highly complex and highly individualized human beings, and that anything I do to teach them, if it is going to work, must become an inherent part of their personal schemata for dealing with the world.

One of the problems I have encountered as I've read about cognition has been the difficulties theorists have with getting at accurate evaluation techniques which give realistic renditions of cognitive style. The Protocol research technique asks students to verbally create their mental processes for writing; but the act of speaking the essay potentially creates a different context than writing the essay does and ignores the significance of the physical act of writing. Direct observation of students involved in writing gives an inaccurate picture of the student's mental processes. Attempts to question "good" and "bad" writers for purposes of comparison and contrast of processes leads to inaccurate comparisons because questioning creates a significantly different context than writing does; how a student responds to questions may very largely be based in perceptions of what a "right" answer should be. Little has been discovered that applies across-the-board to the ways students learn to write. There is, as yet, no accurate way to get into the heads of students, assess the multitude of symbols, associations, and experience cues which inundate them as they write. When I try to think of how I write, I can barely sort out a few suggestions of what goes on in my head; what I could offer in hundreds of pages would still be selective and inaccurate because the mind works on so many levels simultaneously and largely free of mere word explication. What flows into the conscious mind leaves as quickly as it comes, but with each entrance of stimulus, all other factors are refiltered and reconsidered. To capture accurately even a portion of the mental leaps and lunges any writer goes through would be a phenomenal task. To add to that examination questions about how a student grows from one intellectual exercise to another is a challenge worthy of the gods. And yet we teachers are asked to move students forward from one writing ability to a better writing ability year after year.

Students, like all human beings, are multi-faceted, complex intellectual and emotional creatures; they cannot be easily categorized or objectively evaluated as writers. So why do the theorists continue trying?

It should be said that cognitive theory has not failed in its attempts to get at the depths of human knowledge, nor do I advocate less attention to the subject. No doubt, over time, cognitive theory will contribute great advances for the teaching of composition. But, for now I have to accept unknowns about what learning and teaching are all about; and I have to continue to teach my students. For now it is enough that cognitive studies have dramatized a thoughtful respect for the complexities of learning and changing writing behaviors.

Knowing that students have personalized, internalized styles for learning are clues which reemphasize for me that not all teaching techniques have the same value for all students. Then, the logical approach is to teach individuals. But how can a teacher tailor classrooms to individualization? And how can a teacher probe individual cognitive styles?

In a recent article, "Individualizing the Teaching of English Through Conferences, Evaluation, Error Analysis, etc." (Focus, Fall 1982), I presented what I feel is an effective model for beginning work toward individualizing the teaching of composition. The article does not go far enough in responding to specifics of what a teacher should do in specific problem situations. Unfortunately, there is little one teacher can tell another that will always work in any given situation. So much depends on teacher style and student cognitive style that no two sets of circumstances are ever the same. Teachers are forever bound to walk alone through their uncertainties of how to teach students. Many opt for the safe walk down the middle of the road hoping that most of the students gain something. But then there are the failures, the students who never quite catch on, or who are given up for hopeless after the teacher's most sincere efforts to put the information out there for them. In my article I suggested that an individualized approach works toward reaching everyone; but it only works if the teacher is keenly aware of the students' views of the world, the classroom, learning in general, and the value of the written word.

Many of the underlying concerns of individualization have to do with components of cognitive style and how a teacher gets at students' perceptions of self as they take on the difficult task of surviving a writing course. Students may come to composition class intent upon overcoming problems, intent upon walking out better writers; others come to class merely hoping to survive; others come with dread and sorrow; still others have no idea why they are in class except that it is required. Composition classes are rarely taken as "fun" classes. Few students really see any significant value beyond the school setting for the subtleties of written language. In other words, writing has not been personalized for them; it has not met their individual goals and aspirations. Even when students perceive writing as being important to them, they have difficulty finding ways of incorporating principles of good writing into their individual schemas.

A teacher who gets to know students as individuals quickly learns that individual student goals are not easily slotted into the common goals of other class members. Students who are eager to learn, who listen to everything told to them, and who make practical application of learned writing strategies significant for their own use are few and far between. More often, teachers are confronted with students who resist the teacher's offered strategies, who still go home and write their one and only draft of a paper the night before it is due. Perhaps the students are merely lazy; or perhaps they are demonstrating an imbalance signal which could suggest a cognitive distancing from what is offered to them as a valid model for effective strategizing. For instance, outlining has long been a strategy offered as a way of controlling papers; for many it is a worthless device. Many papers have been supposedly written from outlines; more often, outlines have been written from papers to get teachers off the students' backs. Outlines just don't work for everyone. I personally like brainstorming and arranging hierarchies, but mine are always mental activities rather than words written on paper, ideas forming over time; I always find my written hieroglyphics to be too confining no matter how sketchy they are. My writing processes would be abhorred by proponents of strict dictates. So, how can I go in the classroom prescribing any process as legitimate? I can't. I can only offer possibilities and suggestions. Students must find what works best for their particular styles. I realize that students ought to be expected to look at powerful strategies; they ought to be asked to try them; but, finally, I have to respect whatever strategies work for them, if the strategies really work.

The student who stumbles while writing often needs new alternatives for dealing with particular problems; the student may need my imposition of "tried and true" strategies. If I have only one strategy and it works, fine; but if my strategy doesn't work for the student, then what is the student to do? I see my job as getting at that student, listening to how the student perceives the problem and the weakness of the strategy used. Then, I must look for alternatives which fit the student's projected cognitive style. My responses cannot merely encompass having three or four strategies for a given problem; often the responses I give must be based on a larger categorization of the student's problem. I must always consider the nature of the problem, the general attitude of the student, and the willingness of the student to learn.

Often, when I perceive a student as being in trouble with writing, I must first interpret what the problem is. For instance, a student who continually hands in rough drafts for finished products could be telling me many things: "the course is stupid," "the teacher doesn't know how to teach," "I have too many other things to do," "I'm terrified of facing a writing assignment because I don't know where to start," "I don't see why writing this paper matters," etc. If I were merely to give a lecture and demonstration on brainstorming, "satisficing," rewriting, editing, etc., I might solve a few of the possible problems represented by the potential responses the student may have, but by no means would I have solved all the possible responses listed above.

Very often, students are responding in writing to a conglomeration of unarticulated fears and internalized attitudinal responses to the task of writing. My job then is to get at those responses that are real, help the students see how they might approach the problems differently, and then suggest possible strategies for dealing with the problems. Most often, I find that students who learn that I care about them and believe in the necessity of good writing skills and who can be persuaded to look at the power of language as a tool for their own growth and well-being will begin to make improvements. Sometimes, merely by sympathizing with their frustrations with learning how to write, I become a figure they can identify with and with whom they can make an emotional leap into caring about the task before them. Sometimes students are impressed by the idea that I sit with them non-judgmentally discussing their personal dislike of English courses and why writing is so "hard." Sometimes my caring is enough strategy to trigger a student's already set conclusion about what could work or what wouldn't work as a powerful strategy. If nothing else, the mini-conferences dedicated to probing the students' attitudes get at a relationship in which the students feel at ease about discussing their honest responses to the tasks before them. The point is that I often get at students and their significant problems which underly mere surface errors. By working on the underlying problems, I can have far more impact on the writing situation; and, thus, my suggestions for adaptation of writing strategies are supported by a mutual awareness (between the student and myself) of a deeper, more crucial problem and strategy system.

Linda Flower and John R. Hayes, in their article "A Cognitive Process Theory" (CCC, 31, December 1981, pp. 365-387), aptly discuss the significance of goal direction in student writing. Clearly what students are working toward in their papers is significant. What is transpiring, seemingly outside the paper in terms of self image, perception of teacher expectation, peer standards, relevance of previous writing encounters, etc., is as much a part of the goal setting process as meeting audience, establishing a vocabulary equal to the audience, or any other factors involved in the ongoing process of goal reevaluation and concentration. As a teacher, it is my job to be constantly aware of my students' "goals" not only regarding the written work, but regarding those "external" factors as well.

Flower and Hayes have written several articles dealing with cognition. To date, they have suggested the most reasonable teaching approach I have found: a process approach. A process approach seems to appreciate and accept the idea that writing incorporates a multitude of thought processes, tasks, and considerations; it accurately suggests the complexity of constant examination and reevaluation of material that students bring to the writing asked of them. But, the process approach does not go far enough in establishing accessible plans that students can fully enter into while engaging in other pressing matters of their lives; it assumes an awareness and acceptance on the part of the student which may not be there in all cases. It is the teacher who must make the process approach work; and that is a task which summons the teacher's willingness to look beyond writing and the classroom. The teacher must look ultimately to the student and the student's needs and goals. If the teacher is to have an impact, the student's needs and goals will be met with responses equal to the student's cognitive styles. The only test of the teacher's rightness and the student's real learning will be in how the student writes; the good teacher will be watching closely, will be ready with alternative possibilities and with an eye toward helping the student hurdle problems one by one as they arise.

The act of writing is a complex cognitive process worthy of study and clarification. Someday, perhaps, categorization of cognitive styles may lead to some generalizations which will allow teachers to make across-the-board assumptions about how to teach composition adequately to classrooms of students. In the meantime, teachers have individual students who are forced to interact with other students, with the school environment, and with the teachers to succeed in the difficult task of learning how to write. Examination of students as individuals is the only tool the teacher has for establishing a sense of cognitive style and for making a difference; armed with that knowledge, a teacher can go a long way toward success in bringing students to greater writing proficiency.

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AUDIENCE: A BIBLIOGRAPHICAL ESSAY

by
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Part One of this bibliography cites selected audience-related studies in business communication. Entires in Part Two are arranged according to audience-related topics addressed in the 1976 through May 1982 issues of *Research in the Teaching of English* (*RTE*), *College English* (*CE*), and *College Composition and Communication* (*CCC*).

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LESS "RESEARCH," MORE APPLICATION? A TEACHER-WRITER SPEAKS

by
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Whoa! Before reading or doing much more "research in the teaching of composition," let's publicize and apply what's already known--but still neglected. Specifically, let's review five major truths about writing as such. Actual, working writers know well how true they are. Recent "new composition" research is affirming them too. But many classroom teachers don't yet realize or apply them as much as perhaps they might. (I've been among those myself.) For, TRADITIONAL "SCHOOLWRITING" IS NOT REAL WRITING, WRITING AS SUCH. The still-typical "theme"--in its lack of process, in its subject-matter and audience and purpose as limited, in its role of the writer as passive--still tends to be rather unrealistic as a writing act. Still; yet.

I know this seems a brash claim. I guess I'm wearing three hats here. As a teacher, I've labored in the stubbly vineyards of college freshman English for 15 years. As a researcher in composition, I've been keeping up (or trying to) with the excitingly-exploding field of "new composition" studies of the writing process. But especially, in the last five years, I've become an actual, real-world writer of sorts--to the tune of 132 feature articles of varied types published in 15 magazines (on boating and nature, my avocations). I would not pull any haughty rank here. My shirtsleeves apprenticeship was sweaty indeed. You could have heavily red-pencilled my early articles; they were tangled in structure, clogged with wordiness, and wavering with self-indulgent digressions irrelevant to the readers. Editors variously corrected, or rejected, those.

But, as I plunged into writing area-descriptions for boaters, and then opinion-pieces and mood-pieces and humor and how-to pieces too, I found that I was plunging into real writing, writing as such. I soon saw that real writing is essentially "dynamic discovery and delivery," a challenge indeed. The real writer must assess subject with whole self, then shape same to an actual reader out there, for purpose and point. By contrast, "schoolwriting," alas began to seem more and more unreal, like "canning course--content correctly." The pupil writes only to prove subject-mastery to the instructor. Doesn't discover. Doesn't communicate. Which is bad. For in real life, our students will have to write, admittedly not feature articles, but real writing: real letters; memoranda; reports; on the job, also in civic and personal life. Not just "correct" five-paragraph essays. Effective documents, to diverse audiences, for plural purposes.

Is my criticism of "schoolwriting," too maverick or eccentric? A few other teachers might concur with the criticism. In 1962, Ken Macrorie condemned "Englısh," the polite-safe-empty reciting of second-hand material in a rhetorical vacuum: no real writer, reader, purpose. More recently (and objectively), other *researchers* have concurred, seemingly. The NCTE Applebee study of *Writing in the Secondary Schools* found that even now, most teachers still ask students to "parrot back facts," "give back information" to teacher "in the role of examiner." Teachers still don't have students "practice real-life roles as informed explainers or persuaders, writing to colleagues or unknown readers." Finally, many *students* themselves come to agree that school-writing is unrealistic. Fully 90% of my entering freshmen claim that in high school, they wrote only formal themes to the teachers, and were graded (as Terry put it) "half on the mechanics and half on whether s/he liked it." For most students, thus, my English 101 (which emphasizes real writing, not just themes) causes some real growing pains before the gains begin to arrive.

So. As shirtsleeves writer, then, as well as teacher and researcher, I'd say: recent research in the "New Composition," emphasizing the five truths about writing as dynamic discovery and delivery, seems right on the mark--at least juding by what I (for one) know and have experienced of real-world writing, what it is and isn't, what our students will be needing "out there." I would *not* say: let's discourage doing further research in composition. I *would* simply say: let's encourage broadcasting and applying these great known truths *now*. It's not easy (I know I've been "retooling" thus for three years now). *But* it does seem worth it. For our students. For ourselves. Here then are five "truths" about writing not always reflected in classrooms yet:

(1) PROCESS, not final product. That's a buzzword nowadays; but still, students (my entering freshmen, anyhow) are not being taught much prewriting, or rewriting. Applebee reports that highschoolers are usually just given a few instructions, then they write "cold," then are corrected for mechanics only, and usually do not rewrite, either. Surveying the revolutionary "new paradigm" for teaching writing which is emerging, Maxine Hairston (in *College Composition and Communication* for February 1982) notes that we now focus on the writing "process" which is "recursive rather than linear," intertwining pre- and re-writing with writing. From my own grubby perspective as working writer: I SHOULD GUESS SO! Let me validate and confirm that wisdom, as I sit at my rat's-nest desk awash with dozens of scratchy notecards, plus three or four tangled rough drafts at least--even for a simple argument that small boats are better than large; or a simple how-to piece on sailing in storms.

So, some classroom MANDATES seem to emerge. (A) Show the class a writer's complete set of manuscripts for one article, pasted up on display. (My sample, an interview-piece on a Michigan steel boatbuilder, covers six by eight feet!) My students initially gasp--then recognize that writing *is* aprocess, not immaculate conception. (B) Then take a week or so to teach *some* standard forms of prewriting (such as non-stop freewriting; "discovery draft" to explore ideas; "listing 50 instances about your topic" first; talk-write; and other modes). The kids appreciate this; it helps break them free from writing dead-end "cold" drafts which lock them in too soon. (C) Thenceforward, require that *all* papers handed in, must include *all* prewriting done: all notes and drafts, however "messy" too. This helps make writing-as-process more natural to them. It also helps us evaluate and monitor their use of writing as process.

(2) SUBJECT-MATTER. The typical "theme" is often written on externally-assigned topics (literature; cultural or social issues) about which the student

may neither know, nor care. This is fine for learning subject-matter--but possibly terrible for learning how to write! A Home Truth emerges: "We write well, only when we have something to say--maybe first to ourselves, then to a real reader." The SLATE policy statement emphasizes students' writing on their own subjects. Again: we veteran writers would tend to say: BUT OF COURSE! As a real writer, I myself seek out, encounter, discover my true subjects as I go (if only North Channel cruising grounds; trailerboating's new appeals; how to introduce landlubbers to the pleasures of the sea, or lake). I accept editors' assignments--but for students, a good assignment is an invitation, not just a command: a magnet to draw the writer's self out, not a cassette for the writer passively to play back.

So maybe another classroom MANDATE: (A) Permit, assist, and require students to find, and then write well on, subjects of their own selection. Let these subjects be whatever--motorcycling; nursing as a career; non-hunters' myths about hunting; a construction job; donating blood, etc. But, do we really need more "research" or "studies"--as against common sense--to tell us that writers can write well--and can learn to write well--only on subjects about which they know and care, and to real readers too? (Not that writing on self-selected subjects becomes a magic cure-all. It doesn't. Indeed, we know how "own topics" may banish impersonal English, but may end up producing sloppy and diluted writing. Mere reverie--"I remember our camping trip"--but so what? Or mere truism--"I feel thus about gun control"--but not reaching any reader. No matter' we can still require students to reshape their own topics so that they're telling specific readers something new, or not already agreed with.)

(3) THE READER-AUDIENCE. Many themes are written to nobody really. The teacher-as-examiner is a patient, captive expert. That seems scarcely realistic. Real readers tend to be rushed, dumb, busy--so must be related to well by a skillful writer. Again, Hairston reports that the New Comp "is rhetorically based; audience, purpose, and occasion figure prominently" in assignments, and the writing is judged by "how well it . . . meets the audience's needs." Once more, I'd say: WITHOUT QUESTION! How my early writings were reader-deaf, talking mainly to myself! Now, as I sit alone writing on "how and why to anchor your boat out rather than dock it," I am constantly trying to figure the absent reader. I must assess the audience. This time it's a middle-aged male powerboater on the Great Lakes. I must ask myself: what do they already know about anchoring? What do they mistakenly think (that anchoring's for emergencies only)? What do they not know about it (actually how to anchor)? Why might they object or disagree (thinking it's unsafe in a storm)? What needs-and-interests of theirs can I appeal to (desire for pleasure, escape)?

All this sort of thing our students really will need to know, for real-world writing (such as petitions to authorities; job-application letters; etc.) Hence, a MANDATE: (A) Teach students some basic audience-assessment, as above (speech-communication textbooks are helpful here). (B) Then set a working rule: "Never write for me the teacher, but always either 'us' the class, or a specific audience you (or I) select." (C) At least once, have them write on a favorite subject to three or four diverse audiences. (One student wrote well thus on "the metric system." He did an entertaining essay to "us" on a family trip to metricated Canada. Then an argument-letter to a newspaper, defending metrication. Then a report to his science teacher. Finally, instruction in metric to audience of younger readers.) This all leads to:

(4) PURPOSE/TYPE. Again, the typical student theme often wears only one uniform, the dour black garb of puritan exposition: "to inform." It rarely dons the more sporty, flashy garments of argument, humor, other styles. But real writers will have to write with purposes (rhetorical intentions) which are *multiple and varied among different article types*. Hairston notes the New Composition recommends "a variety of writing modes, expressive as well as expository." The NCTE position statement also urges a variety, including fable, autobiography, vignette, etc. Once again, the practicing writer must say: BY ALL MEANS! My real-world wardrobe must be multi-styled. I must be able not only to inform (about a new boating law), but also to describe (the sandy Michigan shoreline), instruct (how to handle lines), argue (let's be more courteous afloat), give viewpoint-opinion (simplify your boat's gear), do a think-piece (why *do* we sail after all?), a mood-piece (the season's last sail), even humor ("sinking at the Boat Show"), and more. I can thus add other Freelancer's Specials to the Hairston and NCTE lists: personality profile; interview; nostalgia-reminiscence; clarify-and-update for the reader who is uninformed.

Further, real writers will have to write with purposes which are varied *even within one given article they're writing*. I'm slightly amused to see researchers wrangling over systems of classifying types of writing (Moffett, Britton, Kinneavy) and seeming amazed when they find the types interblending: coordinate, subordinate, interfering aims; "dominant and subservient" aims, as when advertising informs in order to persuade, literature persuades covertly, and so on. Once more from my inkstained perch: BUT THAT'S THE WAY IT IS! Take that anchoring article, for instance. In it I'm not only informing. I'm also gently persuading people to try anchoring. I'm also surely instructing the novice in how-to. I'm also (I hope) entertaining. And I am "relating to" the peer-expert, the old-salt reader who's been through it all already. . . .

I surely do admit that most students aren't going to be writing in all these plural purposes (let alone write magazine feature articles). Still, multiple purposes are not only realistic--they're pedagogical. That is, these can help students *learn* to write, too. Knowing plural purposes, seems to help college freshmen two ways. (1) *Early* in writing a paper, it helps them discover topics and angles they didn't realize. ("Oh yes, I see I could do a clarification piece on motorcycling, toward elderly people. I could really do my best instruction on vegetarianism, however.") (2) *Later* in the writing stages, knowing multiple purposes can help students shape and focus the emerging piece toward a sharper final form and effect--but short of pigeonholing, too. ("Hmm--my paper on foreign students really seems to be becoming an opinion-viewpoint, not just a factual report. . . .") MANDATE: (A) Acquaint students with this wardrobe of purposes beyond the mere straitjacket of the five-paragraph theme. The younger the students, the more you'll probably have to reassure them that these purposes are not "rules" which must all be chosen and followed rigidly--but are "tools" to be used or not, flexibly, depending on the occasion: the subject, purpose, audience.

All of which leads to the fifth and last truth: the most important, and surely the most overlooked. Overlooked by teachers (again, me included). By researchers too. But not overlooked by any real writer who wants to write efficiently. It's this: (5) ROLE OF WRITER as involving AUTONOMY, and not passivity. (But the role of the student as traditionally passive?)

I wonder more and more, whether writing can fully be taught in our schools. The educational system of necessity, emphasizes formulas and prescriptions. But true writing, of equal necessity, emphasizes flexibility and judgment. Writing is not merely system, grammar, mechanical correctness. Quickly, writing becomes that "dynamic discovery and delivery"--intuitive, yet also controlled, the whole person seeing, then saying, finding substance, with self involved, then polishing it to master the real challenge of reaching that real but distant reader out there. This requires autonomy: initiative, judgment, decision-making, estimating, and self-accountability (or Quality Control) too. All these are traits of a mature person--the Active Author which any real writer must be. None are traits of the typical student role, the Passive Pupil, who is usually told pretty much exactly what to say; how to say it; and whether s/he's said it "correctly" or not. Fine, but as a result, most students traditionally learn little on their own, and retain little ability to improve next time. Teacher and course "did it all for them." All real writers know that judgment and drive must replace formula and prescription. What "rules" to use? Very quickly "it all depends" on your audience and purpose. To follow rules blindly, produces the work of a deaf pianist or myopic mosaic-maker. (John, a student, wrote a paragraph with three times as many repetitions as were needed or appropriate. To my criticism he replied, "Well, you told us to try to use transitions and repetitions." But, mechanically? . . .)

Still, no "research on the composition process and teaching of writing" seems to be sounding this call for autonomy. Having been "out there" in the writing world, where effectiveness is necessary but hovering teachers are scarce, I know (or believe in!) the value of fostering autonomy in students. My course is difficult for most students because it's an 180-degree about-face shift from "everything given to the student" from outside, to "much to emerge from the student," from inside. I'd wish students to cease being traditional passive field hands, dutifully gathering the crops we assign them and delivering them to the loading dock of the essay or exam--and be a bit more active gardeners on their own, germinating and pruning their own best offshoots in variety. Not that teachers should abandon students to the cold blasts of total freedom. Teachers should simply aid students to do their own work, no longer coddling them hothouse-fashion.

MANDATE, then, perhaps: let's train our students in this "active autonomy" all sixteen weeks, gently but firmly. How? Let's not tell them too much about subject-matter or even assignment-prescription. Let's make them rewrite when we know they can do better. Let's use conferences to have them report to us how the paper's going--not to have us "repair" their papers for them. Let's also use peer-evaluation; informal "publication"; students' marking or grading (commenting on) their own papers; and so forth. Then maybe students will end up the course no longer saying, "I inserted three specific examples in this theme on Dickens; is that What You Wanted?" Instead, they may say, "Well, I now like my description of motorcycling, but I wonder if maybe my tone is too harsh there. . . .") Such active autonomy caps the four other real-world writing skills--and is a keystone skill of liberal education too. . . .

University of Wisconsin
Whitewater, Wisconsin

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CALL FOR PAPERS - - - - IDEAS - - - - - DISCUSSION TOPICS

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Fall 1983 Issue

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